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LITTLE BOOKS ABOUT
OLD FURNITURE
I. TUDOR TO STUART

LITTLE BOOKS ABOUT
OLD FURNITURE

- I. TUDOR TO STUART
- II. QUEEN ANNE
- III. CHIPPENDALE AND HIS SCHOOL
- IV. THE SHERATON PERIOD

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY



JACOBEOAN OAK DRESSER (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY).

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LITTLE BOOKS ABOUT OLD FURNITURE
ENGLISH FURNITURE : BY J. P. BLAKE
& A. E. REVEIRS-HOPKINS. VOLUME I

TUDOR TO STUART



ILLUSTRATED

FREDERICK A STOKES COMPANY
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INTRODUCTION

THESE little books will probably not appeal to connoisseurs, nor will they interest advanced collectors. They are merely intended to offer suggestion and a certain amount of information to that large and increasing body of persons to whom old pieces of furniture are more interesting than new, and to show that no extraordinary income is essential to making a collection. For, as a fact, a simple eighteenth-century chair from farmhouse or modest city dwelling is historically as much an object of interest as the finest example of elaborate cabinet-making. It is, moreover, probable that the huge sums paid for fine pieces are occasionally more the outcome of a vulgar desire to possess than a genuine delight in the beautiful or a laudable interest in the historical aspects of old furniture. A person who purchases an old gate-leg table, a settle, or an oak chest for five pounds has an article of great utility and one which provides a tangible link with the past and is in itself a piece of history.

A collector's object should always be to acquire antiques, not dilapidations. A piece of furniture is not good because it is old. It may be interesting for this reason, but the first quality

which should be asked from any article is utility. As Bacon wrote "Of Building": "Leave the goodly fabrics of houses for beauty only to the enchanted palaces of the poets, who build them at small cost." Furniture, of course, should be pleasing and interesting, but if it is useless it should not escape rejection. It is by no means uncommon to find a broken-down relic of antiquity taken to the bosom of a family where it finds a resting-place without paying, as it were, for the cost of its keep. Therefore the present books are not guides for the collector who wishes to turn his house into a museum, but for him who desires to surround himself with useful household gods possessing historical and sentimental interest.

There are, of course, elaborate and expensive works which deal with the subject more exhaustively than can be hoped in little books of this compass. Such works inevitably describe and illustrate unique specimens of antique furniture which could have been constructed only for the wealthy few. Furthermore they can from their great rarity, apart from their extreme cost, scarcely be acquired even by the millionaire of to-day. In the present series, although we have illustrated fine specimens of furniture for purposes of comparison and historical interest,

we direct attention in the main to simple and inexpensive articles.

The collecting habit is not confined to the wealthy. When the whole history of man comes to be written we shall read that he is a collecting animal. Acquisitiveness is inborn in the majority—it is only a matter of degree—and recognising this, together with the fact that there are little things worth collecting as well as great this series sets out to be a guide to the collector of moderate means. The first volume deals with the period from early times to James II., during which oak was the wood generally in use for the making of furniture.

To arrive at a representative list of illustrations we have gone both to public and private collections, as well as to the floating stocks of well-known London and provincial antique dealers. We should express our thanks to the Director and Secretary of the Victoria and Albert Museum for permission to reproduce a number of the exhibits, and especially for causing a number of pieces to be specially photographed for us; and also to members of the Museum staff (particularly Mr. Oliver Brackett and Mr. H. W. McReath) for various courtesies. Also to Mr. Walter Withall, of 18 Bedford Row, W.C., Mr. J. D. Phillips, of Slough, the Worshipful Master of

the Carpenters' Company, the Reverend Master of the Charterhouse, and the Librarian of the Guildhall for permission to reproduce from their collections. We have in addition to thank Mr. C. J. Charles, of 27 Brook Street, W.; Messrs. Gill & Reigate, Ltd., of Oxford Street, W.; and Messrs. Hampton & Sons Ltd., of Pall Mall, for permission to reproduce various interesting articles from their stock; and thanks are particularly due to Mr. F. W. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin, Herts, whose pleasing galleries are always worth a visit.

The writers of these Little Books about Old English Furniture are not dealers and have no connection with the trade. They are merely amateur collectors themselves, and they have endeavoured to state the results of their own studies and experiences for the information of people similarly situated.

J. P. BLAKE.

A. E. REVEIRS-HOPKINS.

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CHAPTERS

| | |
|--|-----|
| I. ON MAKING A COLLECTION | I |
| II. COFFERS OR CHESTS | 15 |
| III. JOINT-STOOLS, BIBLE BOXES AND SETTLES | 34 |
| IV. CHAIRS | 52 |
| V. TABLES | 69 |
| VI. CUPBOARDS, DRESSERS, AND CHESTS OF DRAWERS | 81 |
| VII. BEDSTEADS AND CRADLES | 97 |
| VIII. WOODWORK. NOTES ON CARVING AND DECORATION | 105 |

DATES AND STYLES OF WOODWORK

| | DATES | STYLE |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| <i>Tudor</i> : Henry VII. | 1485-1509 | Tudor |
| Henry VIII. | 1509-1547 | |
| Edward VI. | 1547-1553 | |
| Mary | 1553-1558 | |
| Elizabeth | 1558-1603 | Elizabethan |
| <i>Stuart</i> : James I. | 1603-1625 | Jacobean |
| Charles I. | 1625-1649 | |
| Commonwealth | 1649-1660 | Cromwellian |
| Charles II. | 1660-1685 | Jacobean or Carolean |
| James II. | 1685-1688 | |

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WE have the pleasure to acknowledge our indebtedness to the following works :

F. ROWE: "Old Oak Furniture," "Ancient Coffers and Cupboards." Thoroughly reliable. In our opinion the best books written on old oak furniture. The result of personal observation and great research.

PERCY MACQUOID: "The Age of Oak." A monumental work, sumptuously illustrated.

SHAW: "Ancient Furniture." Published in 1837. Now out of print, but occasionally to be picked up second-hand. The engravings are probably unexcelled in any furniture book.

THOMAS WRIGHT: "Homes of Other Days." Gives extremely interesting details of home life from Saxon times to Elizabeth.

ROBERT BROCK: "Elements of Style in Furniture and Woodwork." A useful little book.

EDWIN FOLEY: "The Book of Decorative Furniture." Published 1911 with a large number of coloured illustrations by the latest process.

W. B. SANDERS: "Half-Timbered Houses and Carved Oak Furniture of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" and "Examples of Carved Oak Woodwork, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries."

J. H. POLLEN: "Ancient and Modern Furniture and Woodwork." An admirable little handbook and guide to the furniture and woodwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and usually on sale at the Museum bookstalls.

CHAPTER I: ON MAKING A COLLECTION

WE will assume the desire to make a collection of old Oak. How shall we start? It is more than likely that we have a house fairly well filled with modern furniture. If so, reformation involves a process of gradual displacement, and occasionally ruthless elimination. On the other hand, if in our furnishing we start with a clean deck our task is simpler. There is a good deal to be said for well-made modern furniture, and there can be little doubt that certain offices are best filled by it. But a house has never yet been made interesting by a collection of raw modern furniture without the gathered charm of age or the lights and shades of association. We are busy people—this book is written for people who are busy in the main—and although we may not, on the average, spend more than fourteen hours a day in our home, we still want those hours to be as restful to the mind as possible. On the other hand we may be there twenty-four hours a day, and the longer the time the less we desire to be bored by uninteresting things around us.

There is only one Courtenay bedstead, and that being in the Victoria and Albert Museum

at South Kensington we must content ourselves with something less—probably very much less. If we cannot aspire to a fine Elizabethan draw-table worth a couple of hundred guineas, we must satisfy ourselves with a seventeenth-century “gate leg” worth five or ten pounds. The finest examples of court cupboards may be beyond our means, but not necessarily the useful Yorkshire or Welsh dresser, the small Jacobean serving-table costing anything between ten and twenty pounds, or the eighteenth-century farmhouse panelled oak chest, which may be picked up at a country sale for considerably less than a five-pound note.

The idea of an old-oak bedroom is perhaps an alluring one, but there is little we can think of in that direction which would make our eight hours (more or less) essentially comfortable. The old carved four-poster with its stuffy hangings is certainly not hygienic, and there is little else beside in the way of old oak entirely suitable for this room. So we will, for the present, dismiss the bedroom idea with a sigh, and think of it another time in connection with walnut, mahogany, or satinwood.

The drawing-room is the next to consider as to its suitability for the reception of old oak, and as we are to live in the house and not to run

it as a museum, we can dismiss the idea at once. We shall scarcely find an ideal couch, even with the aid of cushions, in the unrelenting oak settle. There is nothing in the shape of a Yorkshire or Derbyshire chair or a joint-stool which will take the place of the dainty occasional seat so dear to the heart of the presiding genius. We might find a small table to hold the hundred and one silver knick-knacks and bijouterie; but we should certainly not discover a pianoforte—"cottage" or "grand"—built in the stirring times of Elizabeth or Cromwell. We might, by a lucky chance, happen upon a seventeenth-century virginal. There is an oak-cased one at South Kensington, and history has a habit of repeating itself; but at best, whatever its decorative qualities, the virginal is but a tinkling instrument.

In the library, or "den," we have a better field for operations, and with a certain amount of adaptation we could fit up our study harmoniously in oak. A bureau with sloping lid and three drawers under, dating from the days of good Queen Anne, will hold our stationery and amply serve when we are in the writing mood. It will not clash with our writing chair with solid arms and sloping back built in the previous reign. A gate-leg table of fair proportion for

the centre and a couple of small oblong tables against the walls will hold all the necessary and unnecessary litter of papers and magazines. An oak dower chest, particularly if it is one with a "drawer under," will form an ideal receptacle for print portfolios and maps. The bookcase will be our chief difficulty. Our oak bureau may possibly be surmounted by a cupboard containing shelves enclosed with unglazed doors. Such pieces are not plentiful, and, after all, we want the book titles well under our eyes. With a little coaxing a high Welsh or Yorkshire dresser will serve if our library is not extensive. The plate shelves will hold the books and the drawers will be handy for unbound volumes and manuscripts. The table top of the main structure will hold a few bold blue and white Chinese or Delft Jars. Old oak is the perfect background for "blue and white," and each benefits by the proximity of the other. But if our book collection is extensive we must recognise the limitations of material, face the fact, and build a sufficiency of oak shelves in uncompromising straight lines, with plain skirt-board and simple cornice quite devoid of any carving or applied ornament. If these shelves, preferably made from planks cut out of old beams, are carefully darkened to the prevailing tone of the old furni-

ture by the aid of a water stain (curiously enough a walnut stain gives the best result) and then wax-polished they will be sufficiently self-effacing not to mar the general scheme. Our writing chair will be supplemented with a few straight-backed seats nearest in date to the period of our larger furniture, and we must have one chair, if not two, for absolute comfort, and these are not to be found amongst the antiques. These modern chairs for comfortable reading must be deep and wide with fairly broad arms and backs high enough to form head-rests. They must have hair-stuffed and springy seats and might be upholstered in brown cowhide entirely covering the frames, leaving no wood visible excepting the short square legs furnished with ball castors.

With the dining-room we shall have still less difficulty. The first consideration is the dining table, and we can choose between three types—the oval “gate-leg,” the oblong “refectory,” and the “withdrawing.” The dimensions of a full-sized “gate-leg” table will scarcely exceed 5 ft. 6 in. by 4 ft.—ample room to seat six persons. It has the slight disadvantage of being somewhat too leggy for absolute comfort. A collector once said, in boasting of his “gate-leg,” that it was so beautiful that he did not mind his guests

grazing their shins whilst there were no legs where he and his wife sat. The refectory table, with heavy top, bulbous legs and foot-rail all round, may be anything from 5 to 10 feet in length, with a width of something between 2 ft. 3 in. and 2 ft. 6 in. The "withdrawing" table is the handiest, albeit the most expensive, for our purpose. A small one would measure 3 ft. 3 in. by 2 ft. extending to 6 ft. in length when open. A large one 4 ft. 3 in. by 2 ft. 3 in., extending to 7 ft. 6 in. in length. The extension is obtained by pulling out the end-pieces which lie snugly under the centre portion when not in use. There are no extra legs to interfere with the comfort of the diners, the extensions being supported by means of brackets or runners fixed to the undersides and projecting backwards into the main body of the table. Against the wall a dwarf Jacobean dresser or serving-table with drawers forms a necessary adjunct to the somewhat narrow dining-table. It will measure about 6 ft. in length with a width of about 18 in.

It is probable, if space allows, that we shall find it desirable to have a second dresser for the display of our willow-pattern plates and dishes, and perhaps a court cupboard about six feet high with a receding and canopied upper story. Under the canopy we can place one or two bold

blue and white jars of the period. The dresser and the court cupboard will, with their various drawers and enclosed spaces, afford ample accommodation for the dining napery and table appointments. The chairs will be chosen, as far as possible, to harmonise with the heavier furniture, and if a couple of fireside chairs are considered necessary they had better be built for the purpose in the same manner as suggested for the library.

Our old-oak room will not be quite complete unless the walls have a dado of, or are entirely covered with, oak panelling. If this is not possible we must avoid all imitations and content ourselves with painted, distempered, or canvas-covered walls in a colour best suited to the aspect of the room. The floor, if possible, should be of plain oak, wax polished, on which are laid oriental rugs—preferably Persian strips—in subdued shades. Here we have merely suggested the necessary appointments of the room. The collector will fill in the picture as space admits, his own fancy guides, and his purse allows, and although this chapter may be considered a counsel of perfection, it is well to aim high.

The next consideration is how to get the things. Twenty or thirty years ago it was an easy enough matter. As old homes were broken up the old

furniture came into the market and so little was thought of it that it went for the proverbial "mere song." Since then, as the taste for old things grew, the dealers and their agents have been scouring the countryside crying "New lamps for old," and hundreds of old farmhouses and country cottages have exchanged their fine old oak, which has withstood the ravages of two or three centuries, for Curtain Road mahogany which will fall to "cureless ruin" in twenty years. The amateur collector can scarcely follow the same tactics and will, in the main, have to rely upon the dealer or the auction room for his supply (although he should by no means abandon the idea of finding things in the country for himself). It does not follow that the dealer's profit is of necessity an exorbitant one. As a rule he has gone to considerable trouble and expense in acquiring his stock and as often as not he has a fund of expert knowledge which he is ready enough to impart to the would-be purchaser, and we can do little less than pay for his experience. There are tricks in every trade, and the old-furniture trade is not exempt from black sheep. But from a fairly wide personal experience we have found the dealer willing to return frankness for frankness. In any case his sins will sooner or later find him out, and if his

business is extensive it has generally been got together by honest dealing.

Intelligent restoration is no little part of the dealer's business. A decrepit piece of furniture is of little use in the home, and it is not every amateur who is capable of doing his own repairs. In buying a restored article we have a perfect right to know what is original and what is new in the structure, and the respectable dealer is always ready to give a guarantee in this respect.

There is no royal road to knowledge of the antique. To know a piece of furniture for genuine at sight is a natural gift to a few and one acquired slowly and painfully by others. The clever fake generally errs on the side of being too good, and the mellowing influence of old Time has never been successfully imitated by the furniture faker. A so-called piece of old furniture may be constructed of old wood artificially mellowed to the right tone, but there will be something in the carving which will tell its tale. We shall find a weak spot somewhere. The faker generally makes at least one mistake. Perhaps in the cross cut of the chisel we shall discover a roughness of the end grain that should have been smoothed by a century or more of wear and exposure. Somewhere in the inner recesses of the chest or cupboard we shall find the unmistakable signs

of artificial staining or soiling, whereas, in the old piece, those parts which have not been freely exposed to the air and housewife's polishing cloth will have a comparatively fresh appearance. This freshness, as distinguished from newness, is difficult to describe. Old-oak furniture was, as a rule, put together with mortice and tenon, held in place by the aid of wooden dowels or pegs. Often, in the course of time, these dowels have become loose. In positions where they can be tightly driven home, they may easily be mistaken for nails. They are, moreover, roughly constructed and quite unlike the machine-made dowels of modern times. It would be foolish to lay down any hard-and-fast rule as to the colour of old oak. As a general rule it is brown, and we can look with a certain amount of suspicion on the black variety. There are undoubtedly genuine pieces extant which are as black as ebony, but on close examination it will be found that it is not the wood that is black but the varnish or wax that has been added from time to time.

It is sometimes better to remove the surface discoloration if it can be done without injury to the wood. Old oak, more than any other kind of furniture, seems to have the habit of collecting dirt and grease which is easily removed by washing with warm water and soap and a little

common washing soda. When perfectly clean and dry a polish of beeswax and turpentine will give all the gloss necessary and bring out the beautiful grain and figuring of the wood. It is practically certain that in olden times furniture was, as a rule, polished with dry beeswax without the aid of turpentine or other solvent, and more rarely with linseed oil. The oil treatment had the effect of darkening the wood, and at the same time diminishing the beautiful grain.

Varnish also appears to have been used from the sixteenth century, and judging from the condition of the varnish still remaining upon some old pieces, must have been a remarkably enduring composition. It is well to remark that oil polished furniture must be kept in a dry atmosphere. When exposed to the damp it is apt to turn to an unpleasing grey shade.

One of the great beauties of oak consists in the figuring. The reader will have noticed that in fine panelwork the panel piece shows a charming figured surface, whilst the frames are straight grained—the whole being somewhat in the nature of a framed picture. The “figures” (medullary rays) consist of dense flakes radiating from the centre and running more or less perpendicularly up and down the trunk. There is a slight element of luck (combined with a good deal

of judgment) in arriving at the figuring, as it often happens that a log may contain little or none worth speaking of. The timber merchant having quartered his log, selects the quarters exhibiting "figures" and proceeds to make his cuts parallel to the medullary rays, which will then, obviously, crop out on the surface of the planks. Such planks, called wainscot boards, are reserved for panel pieces, whilst the straight-grained portions go for more ordinary work. Figured oak is much more durable than the straight-grained. A panel of figured oak less than a quarter of an inch thick will last good for two or three centuries, and often outlive the straight-grained framing which may be an inch thick. The flakes or figures being so much more dense do not absorb the stain or colouring-matter in the polish, and in the course of time stand out in slight relief as the softer portions are worn away by the action of the atmosphere or polishing cloth. Thus it is sometimes possible to detect presumptive evidence of age in oak by the touch.

The small broker's shop is not the happiest of hunting-grounds for our old oak, simply because the small dealer generally sells anything good he may happen upon to the big dealer who can afford to wait for his market. For all that, the small out-of-the-way shop is not to be despised,

and if we keep our eyes open we can occasionally find a fine old piece of oak, perhaps encrusted with dirt and varnish, lurking behind the painted wash-stands, chests of drawers, and rolls of linoleum.

In almost every country town there is an auction room to which household goods are, according to the catalogues, "removed for convenience of sale," and in the West End of London there are a number of auction marts, and scarcely a day passes but numbers of antiques are catalogued. The back pages of the Monday morning penny papers mostly give notice of the forthcoming sales, and the keen collector will run his eye through the advertisements from Christie's downwards, and, if he has time to spare, will give himself the opportunity of being his own middleman.

One advantage of inspecting things on show in the auction room consists in the absence of the notice, so prevalent in the museums, "Visitors must not touch the specimens." The collector will in time train his sense of touch to aid his judgment by eye, and it is always good to be able to open doors and pull out drawers in search of evidence for and against.

It must always be remembered that the auctioneer sells "with all errors of description," and gives no warranty ; but as a rule he is

courteous by nature and training, and with a little tact the would-be buyer can sometimes obtain a valuable opinion some time before the commencement of the sale. Apart from a wide knowledge gained from constant handling of the goods the salesman is in the position of knowing whether they emanate from a good or indifferent source.

The question what to buy is a very big one. The golden rule is: never buy that which does not please you simply because it is cheap. Better give a little more for something you really like, and, having bought, do not part with it until you get something you like better. The market value fluctuates, and you may have to dispose of the discarded article at a small loss. In the main the market for all good antiques is steadily on the rise, and it is a fair assumption that the collector in reselling will be on the right side if he has used fair discretion in purchasing.

Another golden rule is: never be in a hurry. Right or wrong, never buy till you have quite made up your mind—particularly at an auction. There are few things in the world more relentless than the auctioneer's hammer.

CHAPTER II : COFFERS OR CHESTS

THE chest or coffer was probably the first article of household furniture. Its construction being of the simplest it would have been an undertaking within the powers of the early carpenters and joiners. Its uses were manifold. It was a receptacle for clothes, linen, and weapons ; it was a depository for valuables before the days of banks. Sometimes an iron ring was fastened to each end, and it then became a travelling trunk, to be slung on a pole between two mules, and thus carried from place to place. In addition to its obvious uses as a receptacle it was requisitioned as a seat in the very earliest times, and came into general use in England long before chairs which, in early days, were a luxury procurable only by wealthy people. Finally it was used as a bedstead ; Richard III. is said to have slept on his military chest at an inn at Leicester called the "Blue Boar," on the eve of the battle of Bosworth.

The earliest and finest examples of coffers are to be found in the old English churches ; the church being the first patron of the arts, the craftsman naturally turned to her for employment ; and

many of the fine early coffers from Gothic times to the spacious ones of Elizabeth are to be found in the churches. It may be supposed that in no other situation would they have survived the humidity of the English climate. The church coffers in the early thirteenth century were, by order of the Pope, alms chests into which the people placed their offerings in aid of the Crusade. The tilting chests, with carved panels of knights and tournament, belong to the fourteenth century, but these first oak chests are scarcely to be discovered now ; neither are the beautiful Gothic traceried coffers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They are beyond the dreams or means of the small collector. Fig. 1 represents a quite exceptional Gothic coffer which will be found in the Church of the Holy Cross—the parish church—at Crediton, Devonshire. For some years this chest had been in the old Manor House of Trobridge, the home of the Yarde family. In 1901 it was restored to Crediton Church by Mr. John Yarde. It measures 5 ft. 6 in. in length, 2 ft. 1 in. in depth and 3 ft. 2 in. in height, and rests on a plinth which has every appearance of being of somewhat later date than the chest, which probably belongs to the sixteenth century. The carved work is in the design of a traceried window, with ogee arches

ornamented with elaborate crockets. The span-drels filling up the top parts of the panels over the arches are filled with tracery, and on the central panel under an open-traceried canopy is a carved representation of the "Adoration of the Magi." The lock-plate is of very elaborate design.

It may be objected that if this coffer is of foreign origin it should find no place in this volume. Although the flamboyant nature of the carving points to a foreign origin, probably Flemish or French, it may be of English workmanship; as a matter of fact there is no positive evidence one way or the other. In our experience, when a writer comes across anything exceptionally fine in the nature of Gothic carving he is prone to dub it "foreign."

We have not far to go from Crediton to find something as good which is indisputably English. Within the "cliff-like masonry" of Exeter Cathedral we shall find the Bishop's throne of carved oak, a towering, canopied seat rising nearly sixty feet from the floor of the choir to within ten feet of the vaulting. This magnificent piece of decorated Gothic work is put together without a single nail, and on more than one occasion it has been taken to pieces, and once in troublous times it was hidden away. Canon Edmonds tells us it was erected in the days of

Bishop Stapledon (who completed the choir in the years 1307-1318) and that from the "fabric rolls" of the Cathedral "it is possible to point, with high probability, to the two parishes from which the oak came, and almost to the woods in which it grew." Incidentally, the cost of the work and timber was under thirteen pounds.

One begins to ask if Exeter could produce the Bishop's throne in the fourteenth century, why should not Crediton—the mother of Exeter—produce a fine coffer in the sixteenth century? The local adage says:

" Kirton was a market town
When Exeter was a vuzzy down,"

and doubtless, after the seat of the bishopric was moved in the time of the Confessor from Crediton—the town on the Creedy—to Exeter (for greater safety from incursions of the Danes), the good bishops kept fatherly eyes on the church and adornments of the church of the more ancient see.

Perhaps we come nearer to the point when we consider the carved stalls of St. George's Chapel at Windsor, which were begun in 1477 and finished in 1483. They were made in London by two Englishmen, Robert Ellis and John Filles.

It is recorded that six of these superb canopies cost £80 each. (We are indebted to Mr. Francis Bond for these details.) The Great Rood and statues of St. George and St. Edward were carved by Diricke Vangrove and Giles Vancastell—they carved four images at five shillings per foot. Here we find English and Dutch craftsmen working side by side on practically one work, and it redounds to the credit of the Hollanders that they were responsible for the more difficult section, viz. the sculptured busts. Gothic architecture in its essence is not native to British soil, but we call our Cathedrals English even when erected by Norman bishops who employed imported craftsmen. Experts will, in certain pieces of carving, discern foreign “influence,” and even indications of foreign build, but unless we have direct proof, or at least presumptive evidence to the contrary, let us still think of some of our old Gothic carved coffer as English. Fig. 89 represents a small Gothic coffer said to be English, although the depth of the lock might point to Continental origin.

At the end of the fifteenth century the linen-fold decoration came into vogue in England, the idea having been imported from France. Although this form of carving very clearly suggests the folding of a linen napkin, it could have had

no reference to the contents of the coffer which, in those days of exceedingly limited household appointments, would not have been reserved for any such special use. Moreover, linenfold decoration was used on chairs and other forms of furniture, and especially for panelling. An exceedingly fine example (although restored) of a linen-panelled room is to be seen at Hampton Court Palace. It is also said that this decoration was suggested by the hangings which covered the walls in early times, and the idea was afterwards adopted by the cofferer in the embellishment of chests (*see* Chapter VIII: Woodwork. Notes on Carving and Decoration). Specimens of the linenfold chests of the rougher sorts are still to be collected at unextravagant prices, although these are probably rarely of English origin.

Fig. 2 is an oak coffer at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It belongs to the sixteenth century, probably the latter part of Henry VIII.'s reign. The lid is fitted with four plain panels within a moulded framework. The middle one of the three front panels is carved with a floral scrolling ornament, and the other two with a male and female bust respectively, in the style known as "Romaine," of which we shall have more to say in Chapter VIII. The chest has a lock-plate with scrolling outline, and the top rail is

carved with an inscription: FERE GOD TO LOVE GOD.

Elizabeth reigned from 1558 to 1603, and the earliest chest or coffer which, in the ordinary way, one would become possessed of would date from this reign. The decoration of fine specimens of the Elizabethan coffer sometimes takes the form of elaborate carvings of robed female figures called caryatids. On the panels of these coffers these are used in the form of supports instead of purely architectural columns. More generally, however, we find the decoration to consist of architectural façades in whole or in part, elaborate in the case of fine pieces and plain in the case of simple ones. An elaborate and beautiful example of this style and period is to be seen in the cathedral church of St. Saviour at Southwark (close to London Bridge Station). In the opinion of Mr. Fred Roe (a great authority on old oak), this is one of the finest architectural pieces in existence. It appears to have been presented to the church by Hugh Offley, Sheriff of London, 1588. It is said to have been given by him to the church to commemorate his year of office. It is well worth an inspection as, although to procure anything similar is almost impossible, such fine pieces are always worth studying for the purpose of educating the eye

in colour and fine carving. It is inlaid with various woods—walnut, pear, cherry, etc.—but with the traffic of ages now appears all one colour.

Fig. 3 is a chest of similar style and period which, although less ambitious in design, is a happy and interesting specimen of the Elizabethan inlaid architectural coffer. The inlays consist mainly of bog-oak and cherry. Not only is the chest architectural in design consisting of Renaissance arches, but it will be noticed that architectural views have been worked in by means of the inlays.

Ordinary oak coffers of the period of Elizabeth or a little later are by no means impossible or even difficult to find, genuine specimens, although undistinguished in ornamentation, being procurable at reasonable prices. Such coffers have top rails roughly carved with interlaced ribands, known as strapwork, a style of decoration almost inseparable from all forms of carved furniture of this period. The front panels are of architectural design generally consisting of round-headed or depressed Norman arches and pillars, such as are shown in Fig. 4. This chest was purchased at Ipswich for £7 10s. The reader will note that it has been unskilfully repaired. It is quite obvious that similar pieces

of moulding to those forming the capitals should be at the bases of the columns instead of the strips of carving.

Other chests of this period bear geometrical patterns or conventional flowers and foliage. The end panels are usually unornamented, but occasionally the end top rails are carved in conformity with the front ones. More often than not the top and bottom rails at the ends are merely relieved with a simple moulding on the under and upper edges respectively. Less desirable specimens have solid slabs instead of panels at the ends. The legs of panelled chests are usually formed by the prolongation of the end stiles back and front. In the unpanelled variety the legs are formed by prolonging the end-pieces from which V-shaped or lunette pieces are cut, leaving four feet much after the manner of an old-fashioned school form. The lock plates, if any, are invariably of iron, and the hinges generally consist of staples and eyes wrought by the blacksmith.

The furniture succeeding the Elizabethan period was very distinct in character, and still chiefly made from oak. Wood-carving at this time—the Jacobean—must have been on the wane, as chests are generally decorated with applied ornaments, not cut from the solid as in the

preceding age. The joiner's work and general finish is, however, of the best, and a very large number of pieces survive practically in as good a condition as when made, with all the added beauty which age, and perhaps a little beeswax and turpentine and a liberal supply of elbow-grease, give to oak. A chest of this period will easily survive the time of the longest lived amongst us, and in addition there is the reflection—which may or may not add a zest to collecting—that it can be handed down to one's descendants without depreciation.

A reference to the woodwork of the Jacobean period will show a decoration consisting of a line of acorns or drops. Generally known as "split balustrade," this decoration will be found to be made up of lathe-turned beads, drops, and spindles sawn longitudinally and glued or pegged to the main body. The panels are now more geometrical and less architectural. They are composed of mitred mouldings worked into squares, oblongs, stars, and lozenges. For instance, a square may be found containing another square, the four angles of which touch the centres of the lines of the outer one. Again an oblong may contain a lozenge arranged in a similar form; a square may have an L-shaped panel superimposed at each corner, and so on in endless variety. The

general effect, although formal and lacking in imagination, is very dignified and restrained. The feet of these chests sometimes consist of egg-shaped or more or less globular turnings. When the Jacobean chest is decorated with chisel work it usually takes the form (carried forward from Elizabeth) of the rounded arch, with a frieze of strapwork or floral design. The strapwork, however, is less pure than that of the Elizabethan period. It is to be noted that a strict regard for utility is characteristic of all Jacobean furniture. A moderately good specimen of the chest of the Jacobean period should be purchased for about five pounds, and a very fair one for from ten to fifteen.

Figs. 5, 6, and 7 are illustrations of the simpler forms of chests of country make usually classed as Jacobean, although probably ranging in date from about 1650 to well into the middle of the eighteenth century. Fig. 5 represents an early unpanelled coffer made by some village carpenter who has indicated two panels by shallow channelling containing primitive lozenge work. In this case the end slabs are prolonged and inverted V-shaped pieces cut out to form the feet. It is 3 ft. 9 in. wide, 2 ft. 1 in. high, and 1 ft. 2 in. from back to front. Such a piece could be bought retail for about thirty

shillings. Fig. 6, which is of about the same value, is distinctly Jacobean in character with its raised mouldings enclosing the two panels, which add a touch of dignity to an otherwise plain coffer. Although the outside measurements are two or three inches less than in the case of Fig. 5 it is obviously more commodious. Fig. 7 is exceptionally interesting. The frieze is decorated with Jacobean beading; and the lower rail and panels are inlaid with lozenges of hollyhock. All these decorations may be found singly or conjointly on a great number of specimens. This chest is slightly larger than the two previously mentioned, and would be worth from seventy to eighty shillings.

Fig. 8 is a very pleasing Jacobean chest with a drawer, the property of Mr. J. H. Springett, of High Street, Rochester. The moulded panel work shows considerable skill in design, particularly in regard to the L-shaped pieces right and left. The "nail head" projections on the top rail are repeated at the ends. It will be noticed that the top rail is also decorated with grooves which form a reverse pattern to the split balustrades on the stiles. This chest, valued at seven guineas, came from the neighbourhood of Sittingbourne, and, having seen several similar specimens

in the district, Mr. Springett considers it a piece of Kentish furniture.

It may certainly be laid down as a maxim that in choosing furniture we should endeavour to acquire articles of some definite historical interest. A little carving or moulding, however rough, is very often an indication of the time in which the furniture was made, and establishes the link of interest with the past. For this reason a date in particular, if genuine, is of great importance. The chest in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 9), which is carved with the inscription "This is Esther Hobsonne chist, 1637," is an interesting example. In 1637 Charles I. was King. The Civil War raged from 1642 to 1651, and during this period a large quantity of household chattels must have been destroyed or dispersed, just as in earlier times the Wars of the Roses wrought havoc amongst the peaceful creations of domestic art. Esther Hobsonne was probably a young married woman during the Civil War, although the decoration of her coffer hardly affords evidence as to whether her husband was a Roundhead or a Cavalier. The chest, there is very little doubt, was a dower chest presented to her, probably by her parents, to provide a receptacle for her trousseau. The chest is a good example of the free play of the chisel, and without

in any sense being a fine piece is nevertheless a very interesting one. If the Esther Hobsonne chest was housed in London at the time, it fortunately escaped the Fire of London in 1666, when so many, now priceless, articles of furniture were destroyed.

The chest (Fig. 10) which, at the time of writing is placed next to the Esther Hobsonne chest at the Museum was made about the same time. It is much finer in drawing and design, being in fact carver's rather than carpenter's work. The roses in particular are very good, and the whole scheme is as full of fancy as the execution is of good workmanship. This coffer has been cleansed of all varnish, wax, and oil, and the grain of the wood is clearly revealed. This chest was discovered in a country place, where it was being used as a corn-bin. The lid is modern.

We have thought it useful to indicate the prices at which similar pieces to some of those illustrated in this book should be purchased. In olden times, however, furniture was rarely duplicated, and as there is no fixed market value for old furniture, such prices must be accepted by the reader merely as approximations. They are, however, founded on the personal experience of the writers and should be found a fairly satisfactory guide. Pitfalls to the unwary are the

prices frequently shown on the explanatory cards placed on the furniture at the Victoria and Albert Museum. These are, of course, the cost prices at the time the pieces were purchased, in some cases many years ago. In addition, museums have exceptional facilities, many of the dealers all over the country offering them pieces from time to time. Private persons, furthermore, are often willing to sell to the museums at low prices. The figures on the furniture are, therefore, no guide whatever to the present market values which, in many cases, have increased enormously.

There is a bright side to the collection of such comparatively simple articles as oak chests, which is, that here the merest amateur stands on firm ground. The word "fake" is one which haunts the collector on his travels, dogs his footsteps into old shops, and bids him stand and deliver at every cross-road. There is a species of oak which, from its prevalence in dentists' waiting-rooms, is known as "dentists' oak," but it should not deceive a baby. This form of furniture can scarcely be dignified by the name of fake, and, what is more, it rarely takes the form of a chest or coffer. There will be found numbers of what one may term serious attempts at faking in the form of cupboards, side-

boards and chairs, but a person of moderate means has always this advantage over the rich collector, in that his undoing is scarcely worth the while of the faker. Particularly is this so in the case of oak chests. A purchaser of a four-foot oak chest for, say, four pounds, must know that in the mere matter of value for money in wood he cannot be far out. It is very doubtful whether or no an equally efficient modern chest could be made for the same money.

The "old" look on an oak chest is almost impossible to reproduce. It is more than a colour—it is an atmosphere. New oak can be artificially darkened to any shade from the original light brown to black by the aid of various solutions, and its extreme expression is often seen in the "dentists' oak" already referred to. Modern faked oak carving has generally a raw, sharp look, showing that it and the chisel have not been long unacquainted. The colour of old oak is a rich mellow brown—it is rarely black. Occasionally old pieces are genuinely black with an accumulation of oil and dirt, but, as a rule, black oak should be viewed with suspicion. The workmanship is another point of great importance. In old times it was good joiner's work, not what one would term "cabinet-maker's work," and although carefully composed, the finish is not

exceedingly fine. The sides of the chests were fastened together by wooden pegs where the tenon fits into the mortise. These pegs are sometimes difficult to distinguish from modern nails, but a slight scraping with a penknife will at once reveal their existence. As already mentioned, however, the faker rarely directs his attentions to oak chests. The business does not pay, and, moreover, the real old ones are fairly plentiful. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries almost every home, however humble, must have possessed at least one oak coffer. Chairs were still comparatively a luxury for the use of the master or mistress of the house, joint-stools and benches usually serving for seats, and the chest, as already mentioned, was a piece of furniture of many uses. Chairs came into more general use in the time of James I., but chests continued for many years to be popular articles of furniture.

Apart from the form, it is the carving which makes a chest interesting, and it is well to remark that there are several classes of carvers. In the first place we find on an old oak chest (and other furniture for that matter) the work done by the aid of proper carving tools by men apparently highly trained and gifted in that direction. We find that there was a Guild of Coffers formed early in the sixteenth century which probably did

much to bring about the execution of good work. Although the best work was probably not executed by the joiner, we find incised work which was done by the actual joiner who requisitioned the ordinary tools of his bench. He made thumb-nail groovings by aid of the gouge, small circles with the stock and bit, larger circles and arcs by the aid of the stock and bit with adjustable arm, and he worked the minor details more or less deftly with the ordinary joiner's chisel. Lower down in the scale we find something scarcely aspiring to the dignity of carving, being merely surface tracery, which in ceramics would be described as "sgraffito" or scratched work. Such work may be classed among the peasant arts, and apart from their decorative value are interesting as illustrating the strivings of a sturdy race after better things.

Two old chests at least should, on account of both their beauty and utility, find their place in hall and dining-room, and they will probably be found the least difficult to acquire at a moderate price.

In the collection of old oak furniture, period is of little or no consequence. Oak is of one family and all its members are harmonious. There is no sense of incongruity in finding in the same dining-room an Elizabethan table, a Jacobean

sideboard, a set of Cromwell chairs and an oaken chest of uncertain antecedents. Old-English oak furniture owes nothing to the glamour of a craftsman's name. Our Cathedrals, in rare instances, have records of the men whose wonderful carvings adorn the choir stalls and other church furniture, but we know nothing of the master craftsmen who fashioned the domestic chattels of mediæval and Stuart times. The same may be said of walnut—that beautiful wood so beloved by the worm—intimately associated with the reign of Queen Anne. Mahogany, however, immediately brings to our minds the names of great craftsmen and designers such as Chippendale, Heppelwhite, Shearer, Mayhew, and the brothers Adam. Satinwood, amboyna, tulip, and a host of other hard woods recall the names of Sheraton and his followers. Oak has no name to shed a radiance upon it, but it is hopefully regarded as emblematical of the national character, it is a wood of all time and can well stand upon its own legs.

CHAPTER III : JOINT-STOOLS, BIBLE BOXES, AND SETTLES

JOINT or "joyned" stools are sometimes, but erroneously, called "coffin" stools, it being suggested that their special use was to bear coffins. We have known people refuse to have them in their house for this reason. The error has probably arisen from the fact that they are sometimes seen performing this solemn office in churches. It is, however, in the last degree unlikely that in early days, when any article of furniture was more or less a luxury, that any single piece had a specialised use. In the sixteenth century stools were probably in every room in the house. Chests, as pointed out in the last chapter, were frequently used as seats, but "joyned" stools and rude forms were the only portable seats before chairs were in general use. No doubt the stools also served as small tables, and occasionally we find one with a hinge and lid fulfilling the additional office of a coffer or box.

The ordinary types of "joyned" stools, Figs. 11 and 12, are to be found in hundreds scattered over the country.* Occasionally they are to be

* Since the first edition of this book was published they have become much scarcer.

picked up at country sales or shops for a few shillings, but generally they have a more appreciable value as interesting and useful little pieces for which the purchase-price is about thirty shillings. Those of usual form date from Jacobean times when furniture was becoming more common, and a great number survive in good condition. They are plain in form with simple turned legs. and they are of quite a respectable weight compared with a modern oak stool. The frieze is generally plain, but sometimes roughly shaped or carved with conventional strapwork or groovings. A plain joint-stool is interesting enough to possess, although a slight deviation from the plainness of convention is to be welcomed.

Early joint-stools of the time of Elizabeth are very rarely to be met with. They are pleasing and singularly graceful in character, the legs showing the well-known Elizabethan melon bulb form in a refined and restrained manner, as well as a jewel-work decoration.

That the joint-stool was a familiar household article in Shakespeare's time we have ample proof, for we find in "Romeo and Juliet" (Act I, Scene v), when Capulet's hall is being cleared for the dance, the serving man saying, "Away with the joint-stools, remove the court cupboard, look to the plate"; and later on Capulet says

“turn the tables up”—a reference, no doubt, to the trestled tables in common use in Elizabethan England. It may be objected that all this took place in Verona, but Shakespeare, the presumably untravelled poet, would naturally furnish his Italian hall with English furniture just as he peopled his Italian kitchen with Peter, Gregory, Susan, Nell, and other English-named scullions.

If any of the old stools—“joyned-stolys” in old MSS.—were built exclusively as coffin-stools (and it is quite possible), we may well imagine they were of the splayed leg variety. These, with their greater stability, would be more adapted to support their burden in safety than the more perpendicularly built ones. We have recently seen a photograph of a pair of so-called coffin-stools which a Dorsetshire dealer parted with for twenty shillings some seven years ago. He would willingly give as much to-day for a single stool of the same type, with full certainty of making a fair profit.

The Charterhouse has a small but interesting collection of old furniture, including a few solid oak stools in the scholars’ hall, formerly the dining-room of Sutton’s boys before their removal to Godalming, but now the library of the Carthusian Brotherhood. The Convent, built in 1371,

was dissolved by Henry VIII. in 1537. The property was acquired in 1565 by the Duke of Norfolk, who constructed a house on the site of the Little Cloister. The stools, with some massive oak tables, are said to have been removed from the older buildings of the Convent. A photograph of one of these stools (Fig. 13) is reproduced by kind permission of the Reverend Master of the Charterhouse, and, judging by their construction and solid proportions, we can well believe they may have been nearly two centuries old at the dissolution. Mr. Fred Roe is of opinion that they date from early Tudor times, *i.e.* not earlier than 1485. Time has dealt gently with these old stools in their four (or more) centuries of life, and with ordinary care they should, and probably will, last as long again. Everything, however, must have an end, and like the "Wonderful One-Hoss Shay," being equally strong in every part, they may one day, without warning, fall to a heap of dust.

* * * * *

The Bible box has affinity with the oak chest, but, unlike the latter, its use in the household was limited. It is usually little larger than the seventeenth- or eighteenth-century quarto Bible which it was made to contain. An average size would be about 8 in. high, 2 ft. wide, and 16 in. from back to front. It is usually rather

lightly constructed, and decorated on the front with conventional carvings corresponding with the contemporary chests. Occasionally a specimen is found with a late seventeenth-century date carved on the front. The *locus standi* of the Bible box was usually on the side-table or the shelf, but occasionally it had a sloping lid and was mounted on a tall table resembling a stool, in which case it fulfilled the additional duty of a reading desk. Fig. 14, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, illustrates the idea, although made before large quarto Bibles were in use. It is described as a desk, but as the unevenness of the surface, arising from the iron bands and fretted decorations, would preclude its use as a writing desk we can only assume that it was used as a reading desk. But for the fact of the sloping lid we should be inclined to think of it as a small strong-box or money chest, an idea further borne out by the iron handle. The internal arrangements are rather elaborate. At the back is a compartment, the lid of which is formed by the horizontal portion of the top which is hinged to the back of the desk (the sloping lid is also hinged). This compartment contains three wells, three drawers, and a narrow secret recess.

Fig. 15, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is a carved box, of the early seventeenth century,

decorated with two conventional dolphins holding sprigs of oak with acorns in their mouths. The dolphin was a favourite form of decoration of the Henry VIII. period. It is generally supposed to be an allusion to the Dauphin of France at a time when the relations between France and England were friendly. It continued in use and was a favourite design on the fronts of the brass lantern clocks of the seventeenth century. We give an illustration (Fig. 16) of an exceptionally fine Bible box in the Victoria and Albert Museum belonging to the seventeenth century. Both front and sides are boldly carved with a scroll or double **S**-design outlined with small thumbnail grooving. The notched ornamentation down the edges of the front came into vogue during Elizabeth's reign and is often found on the lighter made chests of the period.

In late Jacobean times this scooped moulding became so exaggerated as to become quite a disfigurement. This Bible box cost the museum £4 11s. in 1897; it would be a fair price to-day. There is another Bible box at the museum (Fig. 17) decorated with "chip" carving and dated 1648 (on a part not shown in photograph). This style of carving is familiar to most people. It is of no particular age or country and has been practised by savage nations from time immemorial.

Few tools are required, in fact only one, known as a chip knife, is absolutely necessary, and any amateur with a firm wrist can with a little practice attain dexterity. The effect mainly depends upon the careful execution of purely geometrical designs, and it is rather surprising that comparatively few old examples are met with. Mr. Walter Withall, of 18 Bedford Row, London, has in his collection a beautiful chip-carved Bible box of similar design to the foregoing, which he considers undoubtedly English. Inside the lid is carved the name of Thomas Middleton—possibly the poet of that name, born 1574, died 1626.

Fig. 18 is a Bible box on a typical Jacobean table stand which was probably built some little time later than the box. Any number of theories could be advanced to account for the apparent difference in the style of the two articles. The carved initials may stand for some worthy farmer who had a Bible box built by the village joiner. In course of time, perchance, it and the family Bible came by inheritance to his son or daughter, who had moved to a large town. A stand on more classical lines would be built for it and, judging by the wear on the tread bar, it was for many years used as a box and reading desk combined. This interesting relic, together with the

little desk (Fig. 19) are the property of Messrs. Gill and Reigate, who have kindly lent the photographs for reproduction. As in the last case the stand is again of apparently later date, and being of no particular age, type, or beauty, need hardly be taken into account. The desk itself loses somewhat in appearance by being sunk to an unnecessary depth into the top of the stand. The front is carved with a simple tulip decoration, the name of the owner (Robert Baker), and 1660, the year of the restoration of Charles II. Mr. Fred Roe, in his volume, "Old Oak Furniture," mentions this desk as having come originally from Stratford-on-Avon and having probably been made for one of the Baker family connected with the Hathaways of Shottery, one of whom, it will be remembered, married Shakespeare.

Figs. 20, 21, and 22 represent three Bible boxes of ordinary country make belonging to the seventeenth or early eighteenth century, with conventional incised work scarcely aspiring to the dignity of carving. These homely boxes have a decorative value and charm of old-worldliness often lacking in more pretentious things. Well-preserved Bible boxes of this class have a retail value of from twenty to thirty shillings, and less worthy specimens may be obtained at from ten

to fifteen shillings. Quite recently we saw a simple Bible box for sale at Sherborne. It was decorated with an incised floral design dated 1739, in excellent preservation, with the original lock-plate complete, and priced at seven shillings and sixpence. The Vale of Blackmoor on the Dorset and Somerset borders, the heart of the "Hardy Country" round Sherborne and Dorchester, abounds with old-world cottages and farmhouses, and was, until recently, a happy hunting-ground for the old-oak collector. But the days of great bargains, thereabouts, are gone by. Fine old West Country oak chests which, a few years ago, could be picked up in the Vale for a pound or two, will to-day find eager purchasers at four or five pounds, and other articles have advanced in like manner as to selling values.

It is very probable that many boxes classed as Bible boxes were constructed to hold deeds and other papers in households which could not afford the luxury of a more costly "strong box." Such boxes, whilst not being burglar proof, were a sufficient safeguard against prying eyes. Apart from its original use the Bible box is not to be despised as a handy article of furniture in our scheme of decoration. Mounted on a contemporary joint-stool, if not on its original pedestal, it is a pleasing object to the eye and invaluable

for holding the numberless small articles in daily use in the hall or dining-room.

* * * *

In Saxon times the settle was more or less a luxury and probably found only in the greater houses. It was reserved for the 'Thane and his lady, and was placed on the raised dais overlooking the lower tables in the great hall at which, on benches and stools, would be seated the guests and household servants. 'Then later, when fireplaces were in use, the settle might be placed near the great open fireplace and at right angles to the hearth. The end farthest away from the fire was tall enough to form a shelter from draughts proceeding from badly fitting doors and unglazed windows. The early settles had solid ends and tall backs, but as the construction of the houses improved and draught prevention was less necessary the backs became lower and the ends open. This form of settle survived in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century inglenooks still occasionally found in farmhouses and country taverns. We merely mention Saxon and early-English settles in passing. They are interesting from a historical point of view, but will surely not come within the ken of the amateur collector, who will scarcely find anything of an earlier make than late Tudor or Jacobean.

In Tudor times settles frequently served both as seats and coffers. When we remember that the narrow coffer of early days was used as a seat, we can well believe that the settle was evolved from the coffer. On the other hand the coffer and the settle were coeval, and in some cases the otherwise waste space beneath the seat of the settle was probably enclosed for reasons of economy. It is hardly a point to dogmatise upon. Most certainly we find the same decoration on the box settles as on the chests pure and simple. In the eighteenth century we find a further development in the shape of tall, cumbrous cupboards with settles built on to the lower parts—the cupboard portion being used for storage of linen and even fitches of bacon. These are eminently uncomfortable pieces and scarcely the seats one would have chosen to sit down upon for a quiet evening pipe and glass with a distinct risk of disturbance from a busy housewife hunting for the family linen.

Figs. 23 and 24, in the possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate, are of the ordinary Elizabethan and Jacobean types of farmhouse settles. They are of ample proportions and solid make—good for a further two centuries of life. In one case (Fig. 24) the tall back is continued downwards to the floor for the purpose of excluding draughts.

We can imagine this settle placed in the farm kitchen at right angles to the great fireplace with its back to the door.

Fig. 25 represents an early seventeenth-century settle of the Yorkshire type, 5 ft. 8 in. long and 4 ft. 8 in. high, in the collection of Mr. Walter Withall. It is a piece which at once arrests the eye. There is nothing strikingly original or clever in the carved designs, but the whole structure is full of character. Unlike our modern pieces of furniture which, turned out by the hundred in factories, speak nothing of the individual worker, in this old settle we see the man in every detail. It was put together in leisurely fashion—tongued and mortised in simple style and fastened with oaken pegs. Except for cracks in three of the panels it is practically as good as the day it was carried home from the joiner's shop to the farmhouse or tavern. At first sight the carving looks quite symmetrical, but on closer inspection all sorts of little discrepancies will be found. Mr. Withall imagines that the carver, who was also the joiner, started with the left-hand panel, but by the time he had arrived at number four he got rather stale and tired. It evidently stood with the right end towards the fire, as the right arm shows a great deal more wear than the left one. The seat has

been polished by nine or ten generations of country folk who have taken their ease by the fireside. The present owner has constructed a loose pad cushion from some pieces of antique stamped Spanish leather harmonious in tone with the old brown oak. Mr. Withall rescued this lovable piece of furniture from an inn at Ripponden, Yorkshire, at something under four pounds. This was about fourteen years ago.

Occasionally we find seventeenth-century settles elaborately carved. An exceptionally fine specimen, 6 ft. wide, was sold at Christie's in December 1910. The back was carved with grapes and foliage, and dated 1688, the year of the flight of James II. to the continent. This specimen of old-English carved work realised thirty guineas. In contrast to this, in the same month at Willis' rooms an old Welsh settee of similar dimensions with four-divisioned moulded panel back fetched only four pounds under the hammer.

An interesting form of the box settle known as the "Monk's Bench" is that which has a movable high back which, being brought into horizontal position and resting on the two arms, forms a table on occasion. The "Monk's Bench," as its name would indicate, was in use in pre-Reformation times, and probably the majority of them were broken up at the dissolution of the

monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. These composite articles of furniture did not, however, die out quickly. The tradition was carried on, and there are examples extant made in the seventeenth century which never saw the inside of conventual buildings. Fig. 26 represents an interesting example of the settle tables. It is amongst the recent acquisitions at the Victoria and Albert Museum and was, by the courtesy of the director and secretary, photographed expressly for the purpose of illustrating this book. This settle is said by the authorities to be of about the date 1650, and the nature of the carving would bear out this opinion. It is very long for its width, measuring about 5 ft. 6 in. by 15 in.

It is interesting to trace the evolution of the modern settee or reclining couch from the unrelenting oak settle of early times. The settle was built merely for seating, and not for reclining purposes. Our rude and hardy forefathers were apparently content to take to their beds when necessary and did not play the semi-invalid on upholstered couches. The earliest prototype of the modern upholstered couch is found in the carved day-bed of Jacobean and Carolean times. Shakespeare, in "Richard III.", makes Buckingham say, "This Prince is no Edward, he is not lolling

on a lewd day-bed." This is, of course, no proof that day-beds were in use in the days of Richard III., as Shakespeare would allude to contemporary furniture just as he would clothe his characters in Elizabethan garments. At the same time it is proof enough that day-beds were familiar objects to the poet, and probably in common use amongst the fops of the period, and that their use was considered effeminate.

We have not, in the course of our wanderings, happened upon any day-beds which we could point to as dating from the time of Elizabeth. They are said to have solid ends. We give two illustrations, however, of day-beds belonging to the reign of Charles II., Figs. 27 and 28. In build they follow the lines of the caned chairs of the period, and it is not astonishing that such graceful pieces of furniture, which would adorn either the hall, dining-room, or drawing-room, have a current value of from £30 to £40. These Charles II. day-beds are usually made in walnut; they have no back or arms, but are provided with an adjustable head or back-rest supported between two sloping pillars. It is a difficult matter to arrange the genus settle in anything like chronological order. In the main it is an article which essentially "smacks of the soil," and whilst the more graceful types were being built for the city-

bred folk the older and more solid forms were still being turned out by the country joiner for the small squires and yeoman farmers. The early "walnut age" of the city was the late "oak age" of the provinces. But even in country places the settle took on a lighter form in the early part of the eighteenth century—particularly in regard to the supports. In specimens of about 1720 we find the early form of cabriole leg supporting an upholstered seat, but the back is still panelled. It is an easy step in evolution from this to the shaped or open back of the walnut settee of which we shall treat in volume two.

One of the most graceful box settles we have seen—if such a term as graceful can apply—is at Knole, Sevenoaks, the seat of Lord Sackville. It belongs to the reign of William and Mary and is dated 1693, the year before Mary's death. The back is divided into no less than six upright panels ornamented with arched bands of carved guilloche work.

Knole, which is mainly a Tudor building, is a veritable storehouse of ancient furniture, comprising practically all the styles from Henry VIII. to the eighteenth century. In addition to the priceless tapestried chairs, stools, and settees of the Tudor and Stuart reigns, there is a fine collec-

tion of the severer types of oak furniture, consisting of settles, coffers, and chests of drawers of the seventeenth century. A specific charm about the oak furniture at Knole is the brown tone—a tone which strikes one at once as being very apparently genuine. Each piece has the appearance of having been varnished when made and the polishing cloth has done the rest. There is an entire absence of any staining of the wood or appearance of stickiness on the surface. As an object-lesson to the student of furniture of the period covered by this book an afternoon at Knole is worth a whole week spent in a museum.

Continuity is the keynote struck in the history of Knole. William Warham, Bishop of London and Lord Chancellor of England, resided there during the years 1502 to 1514 and was visited by Henry VII. and Henry VIII. Thomas Cranmer was the next owner (1532-1537) and he built the chapel which remains in practically its original state to-day. Cranmer surrendered the estate to Henry VIII. who furnished it as a royal residence, although he never actually lived there. The square-built, tapestry-covered chairs, the **X**-shaped chairs of Venetian design, the tapestries and the Holbein portraits remain to mark the Tudor period. Between 1537 and 1603 Knole was leased by the Crown successively to John

Dudley Earl of Warwick, Cardinal Pole (the last of the great clerics to live there), and Sir Robert Dudley, Queen Elizabeth's favourite, who was afterwards Earl of Leicester. Subject to certain leases it was given by Elizabeth to her cousin, Thomas Sackville, first Earl of Dorset, who eventually came into possession of the house in 1603 (Elizabeth's death year). For rather more than three centuries it has been the residence of the Sackville family, and during that period every English monarch has, at some time or other, stayed in the house. A bedroom was fitted up for James I. on the occasion of his visit at a cost of £20,000—the bedstead, with its superb hangings, worked in gold and silver thread, alone costing £8000. The chairs, stools, cabinets, and silver dressing table, with complete silver toilet-service remain as left by the royal visitor.

In one of the galleries is hung a portrait of James I., who is seated in a damask-covered chair. Underneath the picture will be found, in a capital state of preservation, the identical chair in which the King sat for his portrait.

CHAPTER IV : CHAIRS

OF all articles of furniture the chair presents the greatest variety. From the oaken chairs of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman times, of which no known specimens survive and of which our knowledge is confined to manuscripts, to the superb creations of the eighteenth-century artists, a chain extends of varied fashions capable of attracting the interest of the most fastidious.

It has already been pointed out that, until a comparatively late period (probably the age of Elizabeth), the chair was a construction in the nature of a luxury. Indeed, the old castles were so sparsely provided with seating accommodation that seats were fashioned in the masonry. In Anglo-Saxon and Norman times the stool and bench were the common seats, such being the lot of the retainers who sat in the body of the hall, whilst the chairs (or settles), the places of honour for the lord and his lady, were situate on a raised dais. The scene is vividly painted in the third chapter of Scott's "Ivanhoe." These early chairs were no doubt made of oak, a wood with which England was bountifully supplied, the present common woods, deal and

pine, being rare in those days. To seat armoured knights as well as Saxon Thanes their construction must have been of the heaviest. An early oaken chair of great weight and said to be of Gothic origin is shown (Fig. 29). A somewhat similar chair is to be seen at the hospital of St. Cross, near Winchester

In Henry VIII.'s reign, when the Bible was first printed in good plain English, and the feudal system collapsed, the custom of master and servant taking their meals together in one great hall gave way to the introduction of the parlour or private sitting-room, although this custom was at first regarded with some suspicion by the Church and State as being conducive to seditious plots. This change, of course, contributed to greater privacy in family life, and with it came the desire for comfort in domestic furniture.

In Shaw's "Specimens of Ancient Furniture" published in 1836, there is illustrated a high-backed chair of the time of Henry VIII. with an irregular sexagonal seat (Fig. 30). The outside panels bear the folded napkin decoration of the period, whilst the inside panels are carved with portrait medallions and scrollwork. The arms protrude from the body of the chair, which suggests a degree of comfort often absent from chairs of later periods. At this time a popular

type was the **X** or currule chair of Venetian origin. It was not altogether new to England, and was re-introduced by Italian craftsmen who were encouraged to settle here in this reign. Fig. 31 shows the type of chair used in the bedroom at this period. The pattern is of Byzantine origin, and they are sometimes called "thrown" chairs, being composed of spindles "thrown" or turned on a lathe. Such chairs, however, could only have been used at court and in the great houses.

According to Strutt, in his "Manners and Customs of the English," during the time of Henry VIII., when so much pomp and grandeur reigned, and though extravagance in dress, banqueting, and trains of attendants were the general habit of life amongst the rich, yet in their homes the furniture was plain and homely, very limited in range, and only the most necessary articles were tolerated. Strutt tells us that a gentleman's house at that period probably contained in the hall: "a piece of tapestry behind or over the chief seat or bench at the upper end of the hall, three tables with forms and trestles mortised in the ground, and a hawk's perch. In the parlour: wainscoted walls and a table with forms, three joint-stools, a plain cupboard, two twined chairs, three little chairs for women and four footstools, six tapestry cushions with arms embroidered

in the middle, probably a striped turkey carpet, and irons with a fire fork in the hearth, and two small backgammon tables." In the bedrooms there appears to have been very little besides the bed with black hangings, a wainscoted cupboard, and one chair.

In the reign of Elizabeth the standard of comfort increased considerably, and not only the grand houses but the houses of the citizens (who were now people of importance) were more comfortably furnished. Chairs, however, were by no means common. Wright, in his "Homes of Other Days," quotes a description (1570) of a rich alderman's hall as being furnished with "two tables with carpets (table-covers), three forms, one dozen cushions, half a dozen green cushions, two basins, one chair, and one little chair."

Oak chairs of the Elizabethan period were simple in shape. The backs were composed of solid panels inlaid (in the case of fine specimens as in Fig. 32) with floral decorations of various choice woods. The solid, panelled oak chairs, although their decoration varied, continued to be made for a long period, certainly to the end of the seventeenth century.

Whatever may be our opinion of the comfort of the Elizabethan chairs, we must at least admit they have the advantage of being roomy,

due, no doubt, to the prevailing fashion amongst the ladies of the farthingale or hooped petticoat, the precursor of the more modern crinoline.

The first half of the seventeenth century was a period famous for its feasting. The chair shown in the contemporary prints is one of simple shape, rather stunted in appearance, with an upholstered seat and back. These chairs at meals were placed down the sides of a long table, and in the centre was a large salt-cellar for the use of the guests. The inferior personages sat at the lower end of the table and the more important at the higher end nearer the host. In this way arose the phrase "Sitting above the salt," which was, of course, the place of honour at the board.

Elaborately upholstered chairs and other furniture of the period of Charles I. and the succeeding reigns may be seen at Knole House, Sevenoaks, the seat of Lord Sackville, with all the advantages of original surroundings. Knole House is open to the public on Thursdays and Saturdays from 2 to 5 and on Fridays 10 to 5 on payment of two shillings each person. Furniture of the great houses of this period depended largely upon upholstery for its decoration and shows the Italian influence. Charles I.'s Queen, Henrietta Marie, was herself of the Medici family. The X-shaped chairs at Knole House are typically

Venetian, and probably the work of Italian craftsmen resident in England, either freshly imported or descendants of the workmen brought here in the time of Henry VIII. The furniture of the great houses had now become luxurious and costly. Stowe, in his chronicle of the life of James I., refers to the cushions and window-pillows of velvet, damask, &c. (as indeed they may be seen at Knole House at the present day). The custom of luxury had, however, spread to other classes, as he remarks that such decorations "in former times were only used in the houses of the great princes and peers of the land, though at this day those ornaments of estate and other princely furniture be very plenteous in most citizens' houses, and many other of like estate."

Oaken chairs, similar in their character, were made for a long period, at least to the end of the seventeenth century, and owing to their family resemblance are difficult to arrange in chronological order. Figs. 33 and 34 show two early seventeenth-century children's chairs which are rarely met with. The one with the high foot-rest is boldly carved with conventional floral designs, and the other with five rosettes with inter-twining bands. Figs. 35 and 36 are two arm-chairs of about the same period and have again a strong family likeness, although it will be noticed

that one of them has brackets or "ears" under the cornice. Fig. 37 is the chair known as the "Wentworth," bearing the arms of Thomas Wentworth, first Earl of Strafford, and the date of this would be the first half of the seventeenth century. Wentworth was a notable apostate in the time of the first Charles who sold his talents and influence to the King for power and title. There is little doubt that this chair has been tampered with. The lower panel in the back is out of keeping with the rest of the chair, and particularly with the top panel containing the arms of the owner. It is believed that the lower panel has been inserted, thus raising the back to an abnormal height. The piecing of the styles is easily discernible on inspection at the Victoria and Albert Museum where the chair may be seen. Fig. 38 is of a somewhat later date and there is no reason to doubt the carved figures 1670. It is a more imposing and important piece of the time of Charles II., the carved stretcher being a noticeable and typical feature.

Fig. 39 is a simple specimen of a seventeenth-century chair. The back panel is decorated with a survival of the Tudor rose and the top with the suggestion of the round arch. As the condition of the flooring improved, it was no longer necessary that the front braces of the chairs should be in

such a low position that the feet could rest upon them to escape disagreeable contact with the floor, and the position or absence of this front brace is somewhat of a guide to their period. Heavy and low underframing in a chair certainly suggests an early period. In the present example this has been dispensed with, which suggests that it belongs to the later end of the seventeenth century. Similar chairs to Fig. 39 should be purchasable for about twelve pounds. These old oak chairs, mortised and tenoned and fixed with oaken pegs, seem to be almost indestructible.

The revolution which culminated in the Commonwealth in 1649 brought about a change in the extravagant living and luxurious furniture of the previous reigns, and the reaction was carried to one extreme as it was to the other on the restoration of the Monarchy. The living became simpler and also the furniture, although it must always be remembered that furniture of the common people could have shown little or no relationship at any time to the elaborate articles of the great houses. Spiral turnery appeared in English furniture at this time. It came to England *via* Holland, but its origin is very far back, as there is in the British Museum an ancient Egyptian chair of ebony turned on the lathe.

The chairs which are familiarly known as the

“Cromwell” (Figs. 40, 41, and 42) are of Dutch origin. They are squatly built, with leather backs and seats and twisted rails. Such are amongst the few antique chairs serviceable for a dining-room, and should be purchased, say, for four guineas each.* They are very typical of the simplicity of the Cromwellian period, and their restraint approaches austerity. In a dining-room, however, they will harmonise with any old oaken furniture as they are singularly interesting and unobtrusive. They are frequently covered with modern cowhide, although, of course, it is immensely preferable to obtain them in their original leather so long as it is not too far perished. In fact, a re-covered chair of this class is very like Othello without the Moor. With the disappearance of the original leather its character has, to a large extent, departed. Figs. 43 and 44 show late Cromwell chairs suggesting the transition to the lighter structures of the next period. No. 44 is particularly interesting as it shows the cherub-head decoration of the next period grafted on to a plain Cromwellian chair.

The tall chair, cane backed and cane seated, generally dates from the period succeeding the Commonwealth (Charles II. and James II.). These tall, slender chairs are extremely decorative

* This was true when the first edition of this book was published; but alas is so no longer.

in a hall or even a drawing-room, but they are ill adapted for hard wear, as pressure on the back places undue leverage upon the frame and is apt to lead to disastrous results. Such chairs, admirable to look upon, should be chosen with care and treated with the greatest respect. In a hall or drawing-room, however, they are never out of place in any scheme of decoration in which oak is to be the prevailing factor. These chairs suggest the somewhat misplaced enthusiasm which the nation expressed at the restoration of the Monarchy. The form is not English, being brought over from the continent by Charles II. and his courtiers on their return from exile. Nothing could be more in contrast to the Cromwell chairs recently referred to. We find the backs and stretchers surmounted by crowns and cupids, the crowns standing for the royal house and the cupids seem to suggest the decidedly amorous tendencies of the age. The scroll form of carving was now general, and the carved stretcher was introduced with scrolls of acanthus. Cane backs in some form or other are ordinarily found, but the backs are sometimes composed of splats, which are again sometimes upholstered in velvet.

Figs. 45, 46, and 47 show three caned-backed Stuart chairs. In No. 45 the back terminates in a hooped scroll. No. 46 is a charming chair

with gracefully pierced cresting, bulbous stretcher and depressed scroll feet. No. 47 is more elaborate. The narrow caned panel in this example is particularly pleasing. The legs are scrolled in the pattern of an **S**, and the cresting and stretcher are pierced and carved. The first two chairs were sold for four guineas each and the third for six guineas. Fig. 48 is a Stuart chair with arms; it was sold for £25. These chairs are rarer than the single ones. Fig. 49 is a chair with spiral rails and is decorated with cherubs on the cresting and stretcher. It has been re-covered over the old caning. This interesting chair was sold for fifteen guineas.

Fig. 50 is a fine Charles chair which will, scarcely come within the scope of the ordinary collector. In it the crown and its supporting cupids are clearly shown, the latter being in full figure instead of in head and encircling wings as in Fig. 49. The whole effect is rich and graceful in the extreme. Fig. 51 is a child's chair of the period of Charles II. recently added to the collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The pierced holes in the legs are for a graduated foot-rest, which is missing. Any collector would be fortunate in finding another such a chair. It cost the museum £30.

These chairs seem to suggest a gaiety of

disposition, and typify the revulsion from the plainness of the Cromwellian homes. Among the Puritans, as Green says, "it was superstitious to keep Christmas or to deck the home with holly and ivy—or to dance round the Maypole—or to eat a mince-pie." It was scarcely to be expected that in such an atmosphere of austerity decorative woodwork would express itself in fancy. We read that in 1660 a Puritan wrote: "Sir, the country as well as the town abounds with vanities, now the reigns of liberty and licentiousness are let loose. Maypoles and players and jugglers, and all things else pass current. Sin now appears with a brazen face."

The chairs known as Yorkshire or Derbyshire, after the places of their birth, are objects of considerable interest and utility. Two excellent specimens are shown (Figs. 52 and 53), one with the familiar split-balustrade decoration and drops, and the other with round arches and inverted drops. These chairs belong to the second half of the seventeenth century and are very interesting and serviceable in a dining-room or hall, and simple specimens are not expensive.

From the accession of Charles II. walnutwood was employed in preference to oak and became the fashion, because it was found that carvings and turnings in walnut were less liable to chip.

Most of the fine chairs of the period of Charles II. and James II. (viz. from 1660 to 1688) were composed of walnut, although they are very generally described as oak. The point, however, is of very little importance, as the flight of ages has left such deposits upon them that their colour has become such that they are in perfect harmony with oaken furniture. They are to be found in the halls of the great houses of the period and are admirably set off by oak panelling. Chairs of this class decorated with crowns or cupids (or both) are expensive, but simple examples may be purchased as already suggested at moderate prices.

Mr. Percy Macquoid, in his monumental work on English furniture, divides the subject into "ages," viz. "Oak," "Walnut," "Mahogany," and "Satinwood." It would be difficult to invent a happier classification, but, at the same time, it is in the nature of things that we find a good deal of overlapping when we closely inquire into the nature of materials used by old-time furniture makers. The mediæval and Tudor furniture which has survived is mostly of oak, and we still think of the same wood when we come to the Stuart period. Certainly, in Stuart times, the majority of the heavier pieces of furniture, such as tables, bedsteads, and court cupboards were constructed of oak, but it is a common error to suppose that

the ornate carved chairs of the middle Stuart period were generally of oak. As already mentioned, the majority of them were of walnut. So long as chairs were built in straight lines with panelled backs, and the carvings were in comparatively low relief, oak was an all-sufficing material to work in. With the introduction of twisted legs, shaped rails, and richly carved backs, a wood less liable to fracture was needed. Walnut had long been in use for furniture-making in Italy, France, and Spain, and doubtless the English makers took their cue from the continental craftsmen. We leave it to others to sift the causes from the effects and decide how far the new wood gave scope to the carver or how the evolution in style called for the more suitable material.

The walnut-tree is not indigenous to England, nor to any western European country for that matter. It was introduced from Persia into Italy at about the commencement of the Christian era and is thought to have been brought to England during the Roman occupation. One of the two best-known kinds is the black walnut (*Juglans Nigra*) of America, which is largely used there and in this country—so much so that it is rapidly becoming scarce. The other is the *Juglans Regia*, a native of the mountain regions of Greece, Armenia, Afghanistan, North-West Himalayas

and Japan, and now largely cultivated in most temperate climates. This is the walnut-tree introduced to us by the Romans; but it was not until the reign of Elizabeth that it was extensively planted, and even then probably more with a view to the nuts than to the timber. By the middle of the seventeenth century these trees were coming to maturity, and were utilised for the new style of furniture.

Few, if any, of the graceful tall-backed chairs were made as early as the Puritan interregnum. They came in about 1660 with the restoration of Charles II. when popular taste in art ran riot after the austerities of the preceding decade, and continued through the brief reign of James II. and well into the days of William and Mary—roughly, till the death of Mary in 1694. With the Orange-Nassau accession the Dutch influence in furniture began to gain ascendancy, and we find chairs of the last decade of the seventeenth century with distinct foreshadowing of Queen Anne types. The perpendicular legs were giving way to the early “cabriole” with club feet—the carved and caned backs were replaced by vase-shaped splats, and the flat, fixed seats by heavy framings with movable stuffed seats. Fig. 54 shows an oak chair of the

late seventeenth century in which the vase splat asserts itself.

As William and Mary and Anne are historically the last of the Stuarts the chairs and other furniture of their reigns have some claim for recognition in the present volume, but a better claim for fuller treatment in volume two covering these reigns and generally known as the "Walnut Period."

On the subject of chairs, there is one confession which might have been made at the outset. Most of the types of antique chairs dealt with in this chapter are not advisable for the traffic of a modern dining-room. They are not, in such circumstances, treated with either respect or consideration, and, with the exception of the Cromwell or the Yorkshire and Derbyshire types, are best relegated to positions of equal honour but less strain.

There was, a few years ago, in the North of England, a man who was by way of being a dealer in old furniture, but who, judging by his methods, was scarcely in the way of making a fortune. He had a small shop in a small town, but, as our experience went, the shop was generally closed and the proprietor was scouring the country on a bicycle in search of treasures, and in his absence, as he had no partner and no assistant, the

business looked after itself. Furthermore, when he had possessed himself of a piece that pleased him he was very loth to part with it. It was certainly possible, however, to find him sometimes in his little shop, which was always in a dreadful disorder, and he would also take you across his yard into a large barnlike shed which was a perfect shambles of limbs of furniture. There were bunches of legs of chairs, scraps of carving, panels, and dilapidations of all sorts, as well as articles more or less complete. He had a decided turn for restoration, and as he used genuine old wood for the purpose and frankly stated this fact, there was very little to complain of. His particular affection was for chairs, and when he had happened on one which pleased him, we have seen him standing over it in his shop pulling contemplatively at a little tufted beard with one hand and with the other stroking the wood with a benign and fatherly expression on his face saying: "Now here's a nice little fellow just come home, as sound as the day he was born, a pretty little chap, and here's his own twin brother. No, I don't want to sell them. They are two little Yorkshire fellows. I am a Yorkshireman myself and I won't sell my own flesh and blood."

CHAPTER V : TABLES

It would require a very nice historical sense to decide which in the evolution of furniture came first, the table or the chair. In their early states in Great Britain they must have been equally primitive, equally uncomfortable, and are, from the present point of view of the collector, equally unobtainable.

The table, as a fact, presents a far more limited field for the operations of fancy and ingenuity than does the chair. The top of the dining-table, even in early days, was covered by a cloth, and its legs are more or less in the shadow, so that it offers a rather restricted field to the decorative artist.

In Saxon times the table was merely a board placed on trestles (hence our modern expression, "board and lodging"). It was placed away from the centre of the hall for the reason that the lord and his vassals might sit with their backs to the wall and present their faces to any enemy who chanced to break in upon their privacy. The raised *daïs* probably came after when a trifle more security of dwelling was assured. We also find the round table, even in very early times. It was conducive (as we know to-day) to

conviviality, especially in days when hospitality was a national virtue and no stranger within the gates was ever refused a seat at the board.

In Norman times the large tables in the hall were sometimes fixed—that is, the trestles were fastened to the board as a permanent fixture, a bar running from trestle to trestle as a support for the purpose of strengthening the whole. Chaucer, who lived from 1340 to 1400, writes of :

“ His table, dormant in his halle always
Stood redy, covered al the longe day.”

Fig. 55 is an old-oak table and bench from Ilminster, Somerset, belonging to the sixteenth century, purchased in 1908 by the Victoria and Albert Museum. They are interesting as showing the Gothic influence, their construction possessing the charming simplicity of the Gothic furniture, such things being “ made by a man for a man, not by a machine for an unit of population.”

The trestle table persisted for a great many years. In a will dated 1570 we find a legacy consisting of “ one table, with a payer of tressels, and a thicke form.” We have seen that the private parlour came into fashion in Henry VIII.’s reign, but the great hall continued in use for a long time for the purpose of banquets and

entertainment. Minstrels and jongleurs were popular, and mummers or masked buffoons went from house to house performing a sort of play, generally on the subject of St. George and the Dragon. The great hall was a stage which had to be quickly cleared, and the trestle-table therefore was a convenient article. In Shakespeare's plays, although the action may take place in various foreign countries the furniture is British, and we find references to the trestle-table, as in "Romeo and Juliet":

"Come, musicians, play!

A hall! a hall! Give room and foot it girls.
More light, ye knaves, and turn the tables up."

Fig. 56 is the end of a table, the property of Mr. Walter Withall, and is believed to date from the early part of Henry VIII.'s reign, and is probably a link between the early trestle-table and the melon-bulb table of the Elizabethan period. It was purchased by Mr. Withall in Westmoreland. Apparently the early melon-bulb tables had only one leg each end; one such table is illustrated in Sanders' book, published in 1883, as being in Benington Hall, Yorks. Mr. Withall's table, whilst retaining the Gothic influence, foreshadows the richer tables of the later period.

The melon-bulb withdrawing tables of Elizabeth's reign (Fig. 57) which we see in the museums, and occasionally in private houses and even in use as Communion tables in churches, are scarcely to be acquired by the ordinary collector, except, perhaps, in their simpler forms. Their decoration is almost opulent in its richness, expressing the influence in England of the Italian Renaissance, many of the tables being, no doubt, the productions of Italian workmen resident here. An artist, in considering the possibilities of his work as applied to an oak table, would conclude that his only chance would be to embellish the supports, as the top or board would necessarily be a level surface, and for the purposes of dining covered with a cloth. The legs of the Elizabethan tables were turned on the lathe, and the melon-shaped bulbs afterwards embellished with elaborate carving. Sometimes, in order to produce great richness of effect, they were built up with applied carvings. The frieze or top stretcher of the table is sometimes decorated with inlay (Fig. 58). The legs themselves are carved with bunches of grapes and acanthus, and the top of the bulb with a jewelwork decoration. The mechanism of the withdrawing table is as follows: To the underside of each extending portion are fixed two long runners or brackets

which jut backwards and are gradually deeper in the direction of their projection. These runners cause the extending slabs to rise as they are pulled out. The central piece is not quite fixed, but is held loosely in position by two pins with heads projecting downwards through holes in a fixed piece under the centre. These pins allow a little play in a vertical direction, which obviates any scraping or jamming as the leaves are drawn out. When the leaves are fully extended the central portion drops automatically to the same plane. The leverage of the graduated runners is borne by a solid board fixed beneath the middle of the table top.

The foregoing description applies to the more usual form of draw-table. There is another variety in which the extending leaves are each exactly half the length of the main table top. Obviously, when tucked away beneath they must meet exactly in the middle of the upper portion. In such cases the supporting brackets are not graduated in depth. The leaves do not rise as they are pulled out, and when they are fully extended the middle portion drops to the level of the extensions and the table is then doubled in length.

It is rather extraordinary that the principle of the draw-table is not more in use at the present

time as it is a simple and effective method of extending a dining-room table. Probably the fashion of the round table has contributed to its disuse.

In the hall of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters in London Wall, City, is a rare and charming little octagonal table (Fig. 59) which, although dated 1606, three years after the Great Queen's death, is a pure example of the Elizabethan influence. The melon bulbs are reduced and restrained to harmonise with the conception of a small table, and the round arches interspacing the legs contribute to an effect singularly graceful and pleasing. The cross-pieces attached to the foot-rests are a modern addition for the purpose of support. The table, in addition to the date, also bears the following initials on the arches: R. W., G. I., J. R., and W. W., which, as the records of the Company show, stand for Richard Wyatt, Master of the Company, 1605; George Isack, Senior Warden, 1605; John Reeve, Middle Warden, 1605; William Willson, Junior Warden, 1605. No doubt the table was commenced in 1605 to commemorate the year of office of these gentlemen, and delivered in 1606. This well-authenticated piece of furniture is a delightful example of its period and we are indebted to the Clerk of the Company and to Captain Drummond,

M.V.O., Past Master, for information regarding it. The Carpenters' Company is one of the few City Guilds which is faithful to the object of its institution, and carries on by lectures and other means the educational work of its founders.

The ground-bars in these old tables were very necessary for the purposes of foot-rests, owing to the rush-strewn floors which, although on festive occasions mixed with flowers, were generally in a highly insanitary condition. The passage in "Henry IV." (Part I, Act I) should not be taken too literally :

"She bids you on the wanton rushes lay
you down,
And rest your gentle head upon her lap,
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you."

A quaint reference to the condition of the floorings is noted by Strutt under so late a date as 1706. "In former times," it runs, "our ancestors used to strew their floors with rushes, which were carefully spread over the floor until the use of carpets came into fashion. But the modern method (where carpets cannot be afforded) is to use sand in place of rushes which, in my opinion, is a very disagreeable custom, for the dust arising when the sand is thoroughly dry, is very inconvenient and troublesome."

Although the condition of the flooring gradually improved, the ground-bar or foot-rest persisted for many years.

The melon bulb gradually disappeared after the reign of Elizabeth. Fig. 60 shows a late Elizabethan table in which the bulb is elongated in form and is altogether of a plainer description. Like the former specimen, it is a draw-table, the two ends extending on brackets. It will be noticed that the foot-rest is much worn. The melon bulb reappears in the seventeenth century in the form of a ball in the centre of the leg, a bare and melancholy survival of its Elizabethan prototype. During the Commonwealth all carving appears to have departed from the legs of tables, and does not appear again until the Chippendale period.

The conditions of life were changing. The lord and his serfs had gone. The great hall, with its entertainments by mummers and minstrels, had largely given place to more public entertainments in theatres. The sense of social life had spread itself through the people, and after the sobering influences of the Commonwealth there came with the restoration of the Monarchy a period during which all classes looked around eagerly for amusement.

Although small tables were in use in Elizabeth's

reign for chess and backgammon, the general production of small and light tables was no doubt coincidental with the introduction of tea as a beverage into England. Tea was first brought to England during the first half of the seventeenth century, and Cromwell is said to have been amongst the first to taste it. From about 1660 it gradually grew in popularity, although its price at first, varying from five to ten guineas per pound, would affright the modern housekeeper. In this year Pepys wrote: "I did send for a cup of tea (a China drink) of which I had never drunk before," and again, ". . . home, and there find my wife making tea, which Mr. Pelling the Pothicary tells her is good for her cold and defluxions." Social manners and customs, together with the costume of the day, have always had a definite determining influence upon the styles of furniture. The drinking of tea, coffee, and cocoa, and the consequent sociability engendered, appear to have determined the development of the table from the heavy draw and refectory table into the lighter pieces of the later Stuarts. A small table of the Cromwellian period is, however, shown (Fig. 61), but this is made to stand against a wall and certainly does not give the impression of sociability. In addition to the drinking of the above beverages, card playing (originally

introduced into England as far back as the fifteenth century) became the vogue during the reigns of the later Stuarts and further increased the demand for small tables. Fig. 62 is a type of late Stuart table of graceful form, the X-shaped tie or stretcher and bulbous feet being pleasing features. It should be purchasable for about five pounds.

Fig. 63 is a chair table of the middle of the seventeenth century which, like most composite pieces of furniture, has little merit to recommend it. It is particularly uncomfortable either as a table or a chair, and is inadequate for either purpose, but it is interesting from its rarity.

Although folding-tables were known in early times the "gate-leg," which is familiar to every one, dates only from the seventeenth century, most of the examples being from the time of Charles II. and later. It is the standard type of light oak table, and has continued to be made in numbers to this day. Its name is sufficiently descriptive, and unlike the Elizabethan draw-table its mechanism requires no elaborate description. Genuinely old examples are not difficult to find, the smaller tables being rarer are proportionately more expensive than the large ones. A simple example, say 4 ft. by 3 ft., is purchasable for little more than a new one, say five pounds. A large gate-leg table is suitable for a

dining-room. Admittedly the legs are a trifle difficult to avoid in the case of a party, but with a little give and take this difficulty is easily surmountable. An advantage of the gate-leg is that it presents the appearance of lightness which is very often absent from the solid dining-room table, and this effect, especially in a small room, is an important factor. The facility with which it folds into a small space is also a useful feature. Between meal times, when the cloth is removed, it is an exceedingly decorative article, the old wood giving a fine tone, and for a bowl of flowers there is no more effective setting.

Fig. 64 is an early form of gate-leg dating from the first half of the seventeenth century, the moulding on the side supports and the suggestion of carving being unusual features.

Gate-leg tables vary in detail, although always showing a strong family likeness. Fig. 65 shows the ordinary type. Fig. 66 is a rarer type in which the underframing folds up, allowing the top, which is one piece, to fall flat. When closed, therefore, it is almost a negligible quantity. The present example, which is 2 ft. 7 in. by 2 ft., was sold for five pounds. Fig. 67, which is larger, being 4 ft. 9 in. by 4 ft. 6 in., has charming "barley sugar" legs and is quite large enough for an ordinary dining-room, was sold for ten guineas.

80 OLD FURNITURE

Fig. 68, although of ordinary type, has the advantage of historical associations. It was presented to the Guildhall Museum by Mr. R. M. Kerr and bears the following inscription :

“ Sir Matthew Hale and the other Judges sat at this table in Clifford's Inn to determine the disputes respecting property, which arose after the Great Fire of London, A.D. 1666.”

CHAPTER VI: CUPBOARDS, DRESSERS, AND CHESTS OF DRAWERS

IN the scheme of our old-oak room the choice of a cupboard buffet or dresser will furnish much food for thought. An important article of this calibre is not to be chosen haphazard and without due consideration both to its usefulness and artistic merit.

Although, strictly speaking, anything in the nature of a dresser or cupboard earlier than the sixteenth or seventeenth century is scarcely within the scope of this volume, it is interesting to know something of those used in earlier days. In Saxon and early Norman times, when the majority of the houses were built of wood, the thinness of the walls would not allow for excavated cupboards or store-closets, and any such receptacle formed part of the movable furniture of the room. In the castles and few stone-built houses, however, which have survived, we have ample evidence of cupboards built in the thickness of the walls. The *armoire* of the Middle Ages was a receptacle for the principal belongings of the two ruling classes, viz. the vestments and plate of the

churchmen and the arms of the soldiers. Fine specimens of such cupboards are to be seen, amongst other places, at York Minster and St. Albans Abbey.

The credence has affinity with the various forms of dresser and court cupboard. It was both domestic and ecclesiastical. In the latter case it was a name given to a structure which stood near the altar as a receptacle for the elements and vessels of the sacred office. The domestic credence was a side-table or dresser from which the viands were served, and it was the duty of the steward to taste each dish before serving as guarantee of good faith against poison. In this connection there is some significance in the term credence. These credences were sometimes furnished with enclosed cupboards below to hold broken food and shelves above to hold plate.

Mr. Thomas Wright, in his "Homes of Other Days," tells us that the dresser (*dressoir*) was the only important article of furniture beside the tables and benches in the baronial hall. It was used for the display of the silver plate which, in some cases, was very extensive. Edward I. gave to his daughter Margaret, on her marriage with the Duke of Brabant, forty-six silver drinking-cups with feet, six wine pitchers,

four ewers for water, four basins with gilt escutcheons, six great silver entremets, one hundred and twenty smaller dishes, one hundred and twenty salts, one gilt salt for the lady's own use, seventy-two spoons, and three silver spice plates and a spice spoon.

The display of such an elaborate service would indeed require the use of a "table of degrees" of the first magnitude—one of five tiers built for a royal personage.

Mr. W. H. Hackett, in his volume "Decorative Furniture," gives us some interesting notes on the table of degrees, a piece of furniture designed solely for the display of plate. On the continent the etiquette in connection with such things was strict. For the wife of a banneret the table would have two steps, for a countess three, for a princess four, and five for a queen. Whatever the rule may have been at first in England the etiquette was somewhat relaxed in Tudor times, and we learn that when Cardinal Wolsey entertained the French Ambassadors at Hampton Court he set up his table of degrees six stages high for the display of his gold plate. Henry VIII. went one stage better when receiving the Ambassadors at Greenwich, and at later banquets excelled himself with tables of from nine to twelve stages. The table of degrees of the Gothic

periods in its ornamentation followed the architecture of the time. The illustration which Mr. Hackett gives shows the table of degrees to consist of a series of polygonal shelves built round a central pillar and decreasing in size as they ascend. The structure is therefore pyramidal in outline and to some extent resembles the beautiful tall Gothic font-covers found in some of our old churches. Such elaborate pieces had no place in the domestic economy of the middle and lower classes. Comparatively rare even in those days, it goes without saying that they are now, from the collector's point of view, practically non-existent.

When, later on, the table of degrees grew into the more composite court cupboard, furniture was made in increasing quantities and existing specimens are comparatively plentiful. In mediæval times the poorer classes lived meanly and had little furniture beyond rude tables, stools, and chests. They themselves counted little in the scheme of things, judging by the fact that in mediæval literature we find but few allusions to the habits and customs of humbler folk, whereas, on the contrary, the chroniclers of the time never seem to weary in their descriptions of the feastings, revelries, and junketings of the nobles. According to a moral poem of

the fourteenth century the labourers of France had little to eat beside bread, garlic and salt, with water to drink. Probably the standard of living in England at the time was only a little, if any, better. To say the least it was far removed from luxury.

The terms dresser, buffet, sideboard, cupboard, court cupboard, and credence, as applied to old furniture, seems to have been interchangeable. Each and every piece bearing such names had manifold uses for holding or displaying food, drink, plate, and in some cases wearing apparel. Each term has very similar if not quite identical meaning. Cupboard is self-apparent, a board for cups ; but it came in time to mean an enclosed space to hold almost anything. Dresser (French, *dressoir*), strictly speaking, would mean a table on which in the kitchen, food would be prepared, but was, in the dining-hall, an addendum to the main table. Sideboard again is self-apparent, and buffet is but the French equivalent. Court cupboard again is derived from the French (*court*, short), and denotes a low cupboard on which plate could be placed at a convenient height for handling. The livery cupboard had a more specific use. The term is derived from the French *livrée* (something given out at stated times and in stated quantities). At first the livery cupboard

was used to contain the broken food left over from the meal to be distributed to the poor at the gate. Afterwards it became the receptacle for the rations of the servants, and not for their clothes as might be assumed from the modern meaning of the word. Servants' "livery" was also said to be "served up for all night—that is, their evening's allowance for drink." Then again, there were bedroom livery cupboards of smaller sizes, which would contain food to be consumed between the only two set meals in the twenty-four hours, viz. supper at five or six in the afternoon and dinner at nine, ten, or eleven in the forenoon. The word livery has fallen into disuse in modern English in connection with servants' food, but has been retained in connection with their clothes, and the baiting or hiring of horses at a stated charge at livery stables.

The "livery," "dole," and other food cupboards—the smaller ones generally known as "hutches"—were, as a rule, ventilated either by the panels being partly composed of laths or turned pillars, or by means of small drilled holes; such holes, being often arranged in patterns, added a touch of decoration.

Fig. 69 at the Victoria and Albert Museum, represents a dole cupboard or almery of about the year 1500, ventilated by pierced Gothic work.

The term "dole" would imply that such a cupboard would have contained food dispensed at an endowed charitable institution such as the well-known hospital of St. Cross, near Winchester, where, to this day, bread and ale may be had for the asking by all and sundry. This dole cupboard is said to have come from Ivy Church, an old house at Alderbury near Salisbury, formerly a monastery, now in ruins. The museum authorities are very proud, and justly so, of their little dole cupboard. At the dissolution of the monasteries doubtless many such found their way into neighbouring farmhouses where they would form handy food cupboards. Should the collector have the good fortune to happen on one with a touch of Gothic tracery about it he will indeed be in the way of securing a veritable prize.

Fig. 70 represents a small Tudor food hutch raised on short legs with turned feet. It is the sort of thing which might still be found serving the purpose of a meat-safe in many a sixteenth-century half-timbered farmhouse kitchen. It is interesting as a type of crude country furniture but has scarcely any decorative value.

Somewhat higher in the scale is a mid-seventeenth century livery cupboard, Fig. 71, at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The front and side panels are perforated with small holes forming

a floral design and the date (in each front panel) 1663. The piercing, besides fulfilling a useful purpose—ventilation—adds a certain amount of decorative value to an otherwise homely piece of furniture. It must be borne in mind that this livery cupboard was probably made in some far-away country district. The provinces did not march rapidly with the times and were slow to absorb influences which affected the furniture manufactured in the cities. This cupboard was, by courtesy of the director and secretary, photographed for this volume. These cupboards and hutches have no pretensions to the dignity of the court cupboards and buffets of the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Carolean periods, of which Fig. 72, dated 1689, is a pleasing example. The drop-jewels beneath the canopy are a characteristic feature. These pendent knobs are a survival of the melon-bulb balusters which, in earlier Elizabethan examples, supported the canopies. In this case they serve no purpose beyond that of ornament. There is a pleasing balance in the disposition of the interlaced scroll carving and arcading which is filled in with conventional foliage. The right and left end panels in the top story, with the small central one below, are reminiscent of the Runic carvings on the ancient churchyard crosses in the northern shires and are in the nature of a

departure from the convention of the period. The undecorated panel may possibly have replaced an earlier carved one, but as the very omission of the carving seems to add a pleasing variety we can well suppose it forms part of the original scheme. It will also be noticed that there is a happy touch in the break of the straight line by a slight lifting of the cross stile above the plain panel. This piece dating from the first year of William and Mary was probably constructed in some country district which, in matters of art, would be half a century behind the times.

The decoration of old English furniture is always more or less reminiscent of the ecclesiastical architecture of the country, but not necessarily of the contemporary architecture. During the Gothic architectural periods the decoration of furniture was mainly Gothic, as evidenced by the few remaining examples of traceried chests and coffer. But then we must bear in mind that, even if indeed such articles were not built exclusively for ecclesiastical purposes, none but the wealthy few amongst the laity could afford to pay for work which could only have been executed by specially trained craftsmen, probably of foreign origin. When we come to late Tudor and Stuart times, furniture was required in increasing quantities by the rapidly rising

mercantile and yeomen farmer classes. These great middle classes, although immensely wealthy as compared with the labouring classes of the preceding centuries, would scarcely aim at any high flight of fancy. The furniture was mainly built by the village joiner, who would seek inspiration in the architecture of the village church. Choosing the line of least resistance he would naturally follow the forms which he would find ready to hand in the Saxon and earlier Norman churches (which still survived in practically every country parish) in preference to the difficult schemes of elaborate traceries found in the larger churches and cathedrals of the decorated Gothic period. The fact is emphasised in a large proportion of the middle-class furniture of the Stuart period. It follows the early Norman or Romanesque when it has any architectural feature in its decoration. Also we find more pretentious pieces of furniture—and they are comparatively rare—with architectural features borrowed from the Italian Renaissance and the English architecture evolved therefrom and brought to perfection—the culminating glory being St. Paul's Cathedral—under the guidance of Sir Christopher Wren (born 1632, died 1723).

Fig. 73 is reproduced from a photograph of a fine Renaissance court cupboard in the possession

of Mr. C. J. Charles, of 27 Brook Street, W. Mr. Charles assigns this to the reign of Elizabeth. It was probably made late in the reign by a master craftsman who was quite up to date. The inlays of coloured woods and the strap carving are in the true Elizabethan mode. The grouped pillars supporting the canopy are similar to those found on the fore-posts of the Great Bed of Ware, which belongs to the latter part of the sixteenth century. The *applique* ornaments of split balustrade and pyramidal "nail beads" are early examples of a style which became very prevalent in Jacobean times. The measurements are: width 4 ft. 5½ in. ; depth, 1 ft. 6¼ in. ; height, 4 ft. 5¼ in.

It has been generally conceded that in England the transition from one distinct style of architecture to another occupied about a quarter of a century, and we find it much the same in regard to furniture. The last dozen years of Elizabeth's reign and a like period in the reign of James I. we may take as a transitional period.

We are indebted to Mr. Walter Withall for the illustration (Fig. 74) of an early Jacobean court cupboard in his collection at 18 Bedford Row. It measures 4 ft. 9 in. in width and stands 5 ft. 4 in. high. The carved lozenge-shaped designs on the panels and the deep Jacobean groovings are typical of the period. It will be

noticed that the melon-bulb pillars of the Elizabethan period have dwindled down to comparatively slender proportions. This cupboard, which is in apparently quite original condition, was made by a skilled joiner and decorated in a free and easy manner with the ordinary tools of the joiner's bench. The carver was evidently determined to get his line of groovings straight and true, for to this day the line he scratched with his marking gauge is visible, but he forgot to measure up to ascertain the number of groovings it would take to fill the space and so we find both on the front and sides there is about half an inch extra of blank space left where he finished up.

Fig. 75 is a cupboard mounted on a stand with drawers ornamented with the conventional Jacobean mouldings. The upper portion appears to be of a somewhat earlier date than that of the stand. The slit perforations in the upper panels point to its use as a food cupboard, and it is highly probable that it was used as a church dole cupboard or almery.

Fig. 76, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, represents an early seventeenth-century cupboard—neither a dressoir, court cupboard, nor sideboard, but just a cupboard pure and simple. There is little or nothing in the build to fix its period, but there is an unmistakable early Jacobean

character about the strapwork on the frieze, the guilloche carvings on the stiles, and groovings on the base. The artist has taken considerable licence with nature in the depiction of the quaint birds and wonderful trees which, on the same branches, produce pineapples, pears, grapes, and flowers. This cupboard is surmounted by a shallow tray about 6 in. deep fitted with a hinged lid.

Fig. 77, in the same gallery, is a small sideboard in two tiers, carved with interlaced strapwork. It is very simple in design and belongs to the middle of the seventeenth century. Of about the same period is Fig. 78 (also at the museum), a charming little cabinet supported on a stand with simple turned legs. Here will be noticed a variety of *applique* ornamentation consisting of Romanesque arches, mouldings, split balustrades, and the small pyramidal pieces known as nail heads.

The coloured frontispiece represents a Jacobean sideboard or dresser, and is an excellent example of a style which ran with variations practically all through the Stuart reigns. The earlier examples, as in this case, have no stretchers. The existing brass drop-handles are probably original, but it is also possible that they replace turned wooden knobs carved with a rose decoration as in Fig. 79.

These Jacobean dressers are invariably decorated on the drawer fronts with moulded patterns in endless variety and with split balustrade on the stiles.

It is generally thought that these dressers were originally surmounted by shelves to hold plates and dishes, much in the style of the kitchen dressers in vogue to-day. These upper stories had no backs and were not fixed to the dressers. In the majority of cases the theory is borne out by the marks left by the bases of the shelf sides.

Fig. 79, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, represents a Charles II. sideboard or dresser surmounted by a cabinet. These two pieces of furniture were bought together in 1875, but the reader will discern a decided discord in style between them. As a matter of fact the cabinet is not shown to the public. It was some years since relegated to the museum crypt to keep company with other doubtful objects which, from time to time, have found their way into our wonderful national storehouse of art. But to return to the dresser, which is above reproach; it is a development of the earlier Jacobean type depicted in the coloured frontispiece. Florid tendencies will be noticed in the carvings on the "split balustrade" ornaments and the four under-brackets, and also in the twisting of the back legs which, in the earlier period, were usually quite straight. The top of the dresser shows dis-

tinct signs of having once been surmounted by plate-shelves, a further indication that the cabinet and the dresser have no relationship. During the reigns of William III. and Anne and onward to the end of the oak period (which may be said to extend to the last decade of the eighteenth century) these dresser-tops became more complicated by the addition of small cupboards, one on either side, which were sometimes decorated with inlays. The fronts of the sideboard portion became deeper and often had a shelf near the ground.

The graceful dressers which adorned the middle-class parlours of the seventeenth century are the prototypes of the Welsh and Yorkshire types used in the eighteenth century farm kitchens to be in turn replaced in our own day by the painted deal kitchen fixtures with which we are all familiar.

We now come to the chest of drawers. This now universal piece of furniture was evolved from the simple chest. First we find the addition of a drawer under the chest. One might then call it a "chest with drawer." Such an one is to be found at the Victoria and Albert Museum (official number 1390, 1874)—a conventional chest of the Jacobean period with strap work on the frieze and Romanesque arches on the front panels filled in with vases of flowers. Underneath has been added a line of three short drawers with plain fronts and iron ring handles.

Fig. 8 in Chapter II. is another excellent example of the simple chest with drawer under. By gradual process the lidded box grows into the more convenient nest of pull-out boxes or drawers, often enclosed behind a pair of doors. Such pieces might at first sight be mistaken for a mere cupboard. In some cases, during the transition from the simple chest to the chest of drawers, we find a chest with drawer or drawers below and false drawer fronts to match on the upper portion. The old chest lid is still retained. This type, being a hybrid, is known amongst collectors as the "Mule Chest." The word chest clings to the evolved structure and it is, and remains for all time, a chest of drawers.

At first it is a somewhat stunted affair, and then we find it raised on a short bracketed stand and sometimes, later, on short twisted legs. We give an illustration, Fig. 80, of a late seventeenth-century oak chest of drawers at the Victoria and Albert Museum built in two tiers on these twisted legs so characteristic of the furniture at the end of the century. In course of time we find the chest of drawers growing taller and taller, culminating in the "chest on chest" or "tall boy" of the Queen Anne period.

CHAPTER VII: BEDSTEADS AND CRADLES

THIS volume would scarcely be complete without some notice of the bedsteads of olden days. We suggested in Chapter I that the old oak bedstead, with its tester and hangings, is scarcely the ideal resting-place from the standpoint of hygiene. In the nineteenth century wooden bedsteads were discarded in favour of those made of iron and brass. Latterly the pendulum has swung back in the direction of old types—not indeed to the heavy oak structures of the Middle Ages, but (in outward form) to adaptations of the graceful creations of the eighteenth century.

In early Saxon times beds consisted of straw, either thrown loosely on the floor or placed in bags. These rude mattresses might be placed on a bench or coffer. In the case of houses built of stone, recesses were fashioned in the walls for the accommodation of the beds, and curtains were hung in front to keep off draughts. Illustrations of these sleeping-closets are found in eleventh-century MSS. The Saxon bed was provided with bedclothes, but it was the custom to go to bed quite naked. Wright reproduces in his book an illustration from an

illuminated MS. of a night scene in a tavern where the disturbed (and quite nude) sleepers are fleeing precipitately on the arrival of an unwelcome visitor—possibly a “minion of the law.” The practice of sleeping in alcoves is continued to the present day in some parts of the Continent. In Brittany the *lit clos*, with sliding doors of quaint lattice-work, is familiar to tourists. An excellent example of a *lit clos* front is exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum. An Anglo-Saxon MS. of the eleventh century also shows that bedsteads constructed after the fashion of a modern child’s crib were used.

There is reason to believe that a more solid make of bedstead, with a roof at the head (in modern parlance, a “half-tester”), was introduced soon after the Norman Conquest. All this is a mere matter of history, and no specimens have apparently lived to tell the tale. It is interesting to know something about the decorations of bedrooms during the Norman period. Shaw’s “Ancient Furniture,” published in 1836 and now out of print, gives some interesting extracts from historical documents. For example, in 1233, during the reign of Henry III., “The Sheriff of Hampshire is commanded to take care that the wainscoted chamber of the King in the Castle of Winchester be painted with the same

histories and pictures as it had been previously. And the cost, etc. shall be computed. Witness the King at Kidderminster, the 3rd June." Again, in 1236, "The King's treasurer is commanded to have the great chamber of the King at Westminster painted with good green colour in imitation of a curtain, and also the little wardrobe of the King to have painted with green colour in the fashion of a curtain, so that the first time the King enters he shall find the aforesaid chamber and wardrobe painted and ornamented as aforesaid."

It would seem from the foregoing that it was the custom of the rich at this time to have their rooms wainscoted and painted with various scenes. We find that the chamber of the Queen was to have "the history of Alexander round about it." The idea of having a curtain painted on the wall is a strange device either for comfort or decoration. It is several times referred to in these documents. In 1260 there is the order regarding Windsor Castle: "and in our great chamber there, on the blank wall at the head of our bed, to have painted the resemblance of a curtain or hanging."

The truckle or trundle bed is frequently mentioned in old-time literature. It was a low bed on castors which was pushed out of the way

under the big joined bed in the daytime and used by the body-servant at night. These were often constructed so that they could be taken to pieces and packed in chests for travelling. In "The Merry Wives of Windsor" the hostess of the Garter Inn says of Falstaff: "There is his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing bed and truckle-bed; it is painted about with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new."

Sir Toby Belch in "Twelfth Night" mentions that well-known Hertfordshire curiosity, the "Great Bed of Ware," which measures no less than eleven feet square on the ground-plan. The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses an Elizabethan bedstead of the same type, but of more rational proportions, bearing the date 1593 and the arms of Courtenay, Earl of Devon. It came from Turton Towers, in Lancashire. There are several other fine examples of Elizabethan canopied bedsteads in the museum. The massive carved classic fore-posts are distinct features in this type. Standing well away from the bed-foot, they support one end of the heavy corniced roof, which rests at the other end on the panelled head of the bedstead itself. It is natural that, although a number of these fine substantial structures of the Renaissance period still exist in various castles and mansions, one rarely comes

into the open market, and when it does another "record price" is registered. We are all familiar with the Hathaway bedstead at Shottery, and we know that Shakespeare in his will left his "second best bed" to his wife. This was not, as might be supposed, in the nature of a slight, but was so particularised because the best one was then the widow's portion by right.

In addition to the series of fine state bedsteads at the Victoria and Albert Museum, there are portions of several of the more ordinary types of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These were built without roofs or pillars. Fig. 81 represents the end of a bedstead dating from the first half of the sixteenth century—probably the beginning of Henry VIII.'s reign—with four panels of linen-fold pattern and Renaissance pillars, one of which is surmounted by an eagle, the symbol of St. John. Possibly the other pillars bore the symbols of the other three Evangelists. Fig. 82, the head of another oak bedstead, belongs to the end of the sixteenth century, and is quite Elizabethan in character, with beautiful inlays and elaborate Renaissance frieze and pilasters. Fig. 83, a seventeenth-century bedstead-head, is carved with the Norman arches of simple guilloche work which we so frequently find on the chests, chairs,

and other furniture of early Jacobean times. This style of carving survived till the end of the seventeenth century and even later. We find something similar on a settle dated 1693 at Knole. Although these bedsteads were built in such a way as to be practically indestructible, comparatively few remain, in spite of the fact that the majority of middle-class houses must have contained one or more. This is easily accounted for. When the time came for them to be discarded in favour of those of more modern construction other uses were found for the carved portions. The furniture dealers seized upon them, and the majority were "made up" into cupboards, cabinets or overmantels.

Fig. 84 represents a simple Jacobean oak bedstead in the possession of Mr. F. W. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin. Provided with a modern box-mattress in place of the original laced sacking stretched between the sides, it makes a quite comfortable resting-place. It is interesting to note that the principal detail in the carved work consists of a row of four round-headed arches enclosing fan-shaped ornaments quite similar to those found on the two Bible boxes, Figs. 20 and 21.

Cradles, according to illuminated MSS., seem to have been in use during Saxon times, but

no specimen earlier than the fourteenth century has survived. From a purely sentimental point of view the cradle which we illustrate in Fig. 85 stands pre-eminent. Tradition points to it as being the cradle of Henry V., who was born in 1388. It was originally at Courtfield, near Monmouth, where the infant Prince was placed in charge of Lady Montacute, granddaughter of Edward I. There is apparently quite sufficient evidence to associate this cradle with Falstaff's crony, the "Madcap Prince." It has been described by various writers since 1774, and engraved for several works in the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries. It came into the hands of the late Mr. G. W. Braikenridge in 1833, who strengthened the stand by the addition of two stretchers. At the Braikenridge sale, some three or four years ago, this interesting relic was purchased by Mr. Guy F. Laking, M.V.O., Keeper of the King's Armoury, for the collection of His late Majesty King Edward VII. The illustration is reproduced from a fine engraving in Shaw's "Ancient Furniture," published in 1836. Mr. Laking informs us that since the publication of Shaw's illustration the cradle has been subjected to careful restoration and is much improved in appearance.

The Earl of Mar and Kellie possesses the

cradle of James I. It stands on two rockers and has a turned rocking-post at each corner. It is ornamented on the edge with bands of carving and jewel-work, and the side panels are inlaid with light and dark woods. Another royal cradle, at Hatfield House, bears the initials "A. R." Tradition says it was used by Queen Elizabeth when an infant, but the carving suggests that it was made some time nearer the death of Elizabeth. It is more probable that the "A. R." (Anna Regina) stands for Anne of Denmark, consort of James I., rather than for Anne Boleyn. In this case it may well have cradled Charles I. and his sister, another Elizabeth, the grandmother of George I.

Stepping down to humbler cots, we give an illustration (Fig. 86) of a cradle belonging to the end of the seventeenth century. About this time hoods with hinged lids were added, and the panels usually had raised centres. Another cradle (Fig. 87) at the Victoria and Albert Museum, bears a date carved on the back—1691. This has a movable hinged hood and is provided with buttons at the sides to which the coverlet would be fastened.

Oak cradles of the seventeenth century are very decorative objects for hall or drawing-room, and simple examples can be purchased for about five or six pounds.

CHAPTER VIII : WOODWORK NOTES ON CARVING AND DECORATION

PROBABLY the most useful mental equipment for the study of old furniture is a knowledge of the styles and characteristics of the various periods. The detail of old woodwork is rarely promiscuous. It generally has reason behind it, and it is frequently directly related to the architecture of its time.

Chip is probably the earliest form of carving, and is performed by simple strokes whereby the wood is chipped out, and can be executed even with a penknife.

Carving on the flat is called "incised" work; it is perhaps the least interesting form of carving, and frequently presents a mere outline.

Carving is called in "the round" when in independent figures or motifs.

Carving is in "low or high relief" inasmuch as it presents a more or less flat or outstanding surface.

Although of Anglo-Saxon and Norman furniture we have no identified specimens surviving—and, in fact, we have few examples of woodwork in England prior to Henry VIII. (early sixteenth

century)—history has a way of repeating itself, and in the British Museum there are examples of Egyptian furniture dating back to perhaps thousands of years B.C., from which we see that the methods of manufacture have differed very little to the present day. There are the familiar three-legged stools, and folding camp-stools, as well as splendid thrones and state seats. We find the pieces mortised and tenoned, lathe turned, hinged and carved, as well as inlaid with ivory, ebony and other fine woods. Marquetry was also practised by the Egyptians, who also painted their furniture.

It is said that all European style has sprung from the Grecian temples and the Gothic cathedrals. Certainly the first surviving type of English woodwork is of Gothic conception. The term "Gothic," if one considers its origin, is a singularly inappropriate epithet to apply to a supremely beautiful style. It was first applied in a contemptuous sense by the Renaissance architects to all mediæval style, as by them it was considered barbarous—Gothic. Roughly, there are three periods of English Gothic, as follows :

Thirteenth century. Early English.—Tall, narrow or lance-shaped windows ; ornament sparingly used.

Fourteenth century. Decorated.—Tracery; flowing and geometrical.

Fifteenth century. Perpendicular.—Tracery; vertical lined.

Examples of the pure Gothic style upon English woodwork are to be seen in the coffer in a number of the English churches. Fig. 88 shows Early English Gothic carving of the second half of the thirteenth century. The sunk tracery is narrow and lancet-shaped, with alternating trefoils and quatrefoils in each apex; but the decoration (which is easily distinguishable in the reproduction) shows that it belongs to the end of the first period of Gothic architecture and inclines to the next period—the Decorated. The whole of the door is carved out of the solid, which was the custom of the time.

Fig. 89 is a wonderfully well preserved coffrette in the collection of Mr. Walter Withall, of 18 Bedford Row, London. It is 21 in. long and 12 in. high. The tracery reflects the Gothic style—transitional from Decorated to Perpendicular—prevalent during the last quarter of the fourteenth century, although the coffrette was probably made as late as the sixteenth century. It is probably copied from some fine traceried window. Prolong the lower perpendicular lines, and the eye easily fills in the complete picture of a window of

five pointed arches, each subdivided into two lights. The curves flow upward in true Decorated manner into four intersecting circles, subdivided into five pointed ovals filled in with quatrefoils and double tongue-shaped lights. It is quite distinct from the flamboyant tracery which we find in the doorway lights at Harfleur and the windows of St. Saveur at Dinan, where the upward flowing lines have quite a flamelike appearance. Here the tracery resolves into geometrical lines, and we have the "tongues" without the "flame" tracery. The numberless intersections are almost bewildering. In the lower half (taking it from right to left and left to right) the alternate perpendicular lines flowing upwards resolves the scheme into four ogee-headed overlapping arches. Here, in the angles of the ogees, the artist seems to have reached the limit of his imagination, and where the Frenchman would probably have contrived to insert further details of open tracery, this carver has filled the spaces with disproportionate twelve-petalled flowers, with ball centres, which are repeated in the circles above the heads of the double lights below. The only feature pointing to foreign origin is the very deep lock. In passing, we may mention that Mr. Fred Roe illustrates in his book on "Old Oak Furniture" a Gothic livery cupboard, which he assigns to the

reign of Henry VIII., with pierced tracery, including precisely similar flowers. In the case of Mr. Withall's coffrette there is, for obvious reasons, no pierced work. The flat background is left to represent the glass in the Gothic window. The ends consist of plain panels, and the box is furnished with substantial drop handles of iron, so constructed that they cannot lift higher than the horizontal position, and so will not jam the knuckles. These handles on so small a chest point to the fact that the coffrette was constructed to hold treasure. This is further borne out by the presence in the interior of a shallow tray fitted with a lid. The fan-shaped dovetailing at the corner is visible. Mr. Roe is of opinion that hidden dovetailing was practised in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and doubts that it was made visible before the sixteenth century.

Mr. Withall considers the coffrette one of the choicest treasures in his collection. It is reputed to have been once in the collection of Lady Hopetoun, and somehow, many years ago, it drifted into a dealer's shop at Twickenham. Mr. Withall, then a very young man with slender pocket money, saw it in the window and inquired the price. "Twenty-five shillings." "Too much"; and passed on. After repeated yearnings

and inquiries the price was reduced to twelve shillings. The would-be buyer returned on the morrow with eleven shillings and sixpence in his pocket, but to his dismay the coveted box had been removed from the window. With sinking heart he entered, to find it in the back part of the shop. The coffrette changed hands for the eleven shillings, and the odd sixpence went to a boy who carried it home over Twickenham Ferry. It is to be feared that we cannot all commence our collections with a genuine little coffer of the Gothic period, even if we are prepared to pay eleven hundred shillings for it.

Fig. 90 is an oak panel of the late fifteenth century, and is another and a fine example of decorated Gothic carving. This subject is to be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

As mentioned in the chapter on Chests, the Tilting Coffin belongs to the fourteenth century, mythical subjects being a favourite theme as applied to the carving of the panels. Fig. 91 shows the front of a chest upon which the story of St. George and the Dragon is depicted. It will be remarked that the various stages of the drama are in simultaneous operation. On the extreme left St. George is offering his services to the Princess, and lower down the Princess is in an attitude of prayer whilst the knight is

engaged in combat with the dragon. Further on the dragon, with an expression of amiable submission, is being led captive, by the lady, into the castle, and from a further window the King and Queen are watching the scene of triumph. St. George, with inverted lance, is modestly bringing up the rear. The castellated architecture is an interesting feature, as well as the symbolical lion, who is an uninterested spectator from an eminence. The whole incident appears to transpire over a sporting piece of country, judging from the number of rabbits which are popping in and out of their burrows.

Fig. 92 is a charming little panel of the late fifteenth century in which the stems of hop and oak are cunningly intertwined. It is carved in open work. The effect is singularly delicate and graceful, and the original in the Victoria and Albert Museum may be studied with advantage.

Linen panelling (which is now machine-made by the mile) is of Gothic origin, and appeared in England at the end of the Gothic period, viz. the end of the fifteenth century. By the beginning of the sixteenth century it was a popular form of decoration on woodwork. It is, in fact, typical decoration of the reign of Henry VIII., and it barely survived to the age of Elizabeth. The style appears to have been imported into

England from Flanders. Its obvious resemblance is, of course, to a folded napkin, but it is said to be emblematical of the folds into which the chalice veil falls when covering the Host in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. There are many variations of linenfold. Fig. 93 shows a beautiful example in the Victoria and Albert Museum in which the linen has a bordering copied no doubt from the original fabric. Above is a Gothic border. The panelling was taken from a farmhouse (now destroyed) at Kingstone, near Taunton. Fig. 94 is an old linenfold door, probably unique. It came from a church in Staffordshire, but it was for many years in a farmyard, used as the entrance to a fowlhouse. It is at present the property of Mr. J. D. Phillips, The Old Farm, High Street, Slough. This piece is very interesting from the fact that the pegs and strings which probably held the original fabric in position are also reproduced. Contemporary with linenfold panelling we find the Parchemin panelling resembling scrolls of parchment wound round a rod; it was not so generally used as linenfold. Also at this time are found the heads enclosed in medallions, known as "Romaine" work. These heads are generally unprepossessing in appearance, and bear a family likeness. The linenfold, parchment, and medallion portrait panels are

therefore distinguishing features of the decoration of the woodwork of the time of Henry VIII. Fig. 95 consists of twelve panels within a moulded framework taken from an old house near Waltham Abbey. It shows the portrait medallion style and is full of spirit and fancy. Here we have the mingling of the late Gothic style with the classical. For example, the ogee arches and leafage suggest the influence of the former, while the profile busts and shaped vases suggest the latter.

Fig. 96 is of a medallion panel of the same period, with male and female heads wearing the head-dress of the time. Fig. 97 is an interesting panel also of the same period. On the left is a representation of Adam and Eve in Paradise; in the centre is a shield borne by two angels, containing symbols of the Passion of our Lord; on the right, grafted with other decorative motifs, there are the cock's head and the dolphin. The effect, although wanting in finish, is quaint in the extreme.

In mediæval times the standard of education, social comfort, and domestic convenience were at a low ebb. As the conditions improved men's minds turned towards a system which would enable them to live in greater comfort and enjoyment. They reverted to the classic Roman forms and ideas of life. This passive revolution

from idealism to utilitarianism was called the Renaissance. "In politics," says Mr. Gotch, "it shattered the international fabric of the Middle Ages; in religion it brought about the momentous change which we call the Reformation; in art it wedded faultless execution with an extraordinary fecundity of design." Whatever the Renaissance did or did not do, it certainly had the effect of vastly improving the conditions of domestic life, and brought about more habitable dwellings and more adequate furniture.

In the beginning of the fifteenth century, with the revival in Italy of the study of classic literature, there had grown a taste for the old Roman forms of ornamentation, a taste which spread through Europe. The lovely flowing geometrical tracery of the Gothic periods gave place to what Mr. Brock calls "the more naturalesque treatment of the Renaissance." Fine examples of Italian Renaissance woodwork are to be seen in the marriage coffers in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Nature in its varied forms and manifestations is held under contribution. We find foliage and flowers, birds and fruits, as well as beasts and human figures, graceful and grotesque. Scrolls and arabesques and details of classical architecture contribute to the composition of Renaissance decorative

woodwork, the finish and fertility of which are admirable. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries furniture designing was a part of the architect's profession, so that the decoration in the two branches has a naturally intimate relationship which reveals itself in a similarity of styles. The making of furniture took its place amongst the arts, and even a great artist like Holbein, when court painter to Henry VIII., was a designer of furniture.* In this reign we find the influence of the Renaissance upon woodwork in the ornate decoration, such as heads enclosed within panels, foliage and dolphins in various forms, grafted on the simple English linenfold. A further example of the two styles is shown in the chair, Fig. 30.

The furniture of Elizabeth shows the increased influence of the Renaissance. The gentle tracery of the Gothic periods and the simple linenfold has disappeared, but in its place we find a style

* A Tudor cabinet which some authorities ascribe to Holbein is to be seen in one of the Tapestry Courts at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is numbered 27—1867, was purchased for £500, and is thus described:—"Cabinet of pine, overlaid with marquetry of sycamore, pearwood, Hungarian ash, maple and other woods, and enriched with carvings in boxwood. On the base are the rose and portcullis emblems of the Tudor sovereigns of England. Probably made in England by a craftsman from South Germany. Second half of sixteenth century."

virile and resourceful. A fine Elizabethan bedstead or table is as strong and impressive a piece of work as will be found in the history of wood-carving. The distinctive features of the work of the period are :

1. Architectural façades, including pilasters, columns, and round arches (*see* chest, Fig. 3).
2. The Melon Bulb (*see* table, Fig. 57).
3. Strapwork.
4. Caryatides or figures used as supports in place of columns.
5. Grotesques.

Fig. 98 is an example of strapwork from a room in the house formerly known as The Old Palace, Bromley-by-Bow.

Fig. 99 is a portion of the carved and inlaid panelling from Sizergh Castle, Westmoreland, and shows in its architectural character and its rich and virile decoration the influence of the Renaissance. It was at this period that inlay began to be used in England. Holly and bog oak, because no doubt of the contrasts in colour, were favourite woods for this work, and are used in the present example. Inlaying is, of course, merely the laying in of small pieces of one wood in places cut out of the surface of another wood.

The arts of the Elizabethan period were

characterised by great spirit and variety. Wood-carving was no exception. The Italian influence is marked, and we know that some of the work was executed by Italian workmen resident here and by Englishmen who had studied in Italy.

Elizabeth died in 1603, and the period which followed, known as the Jacobean, marked a distinct change in style, although, as in every change of period, there is a certain amount of overlapping. Generally the richer specimens are Elizabethan and the more severe Jacobean. Fig. 100 shows a transitional piece, being a portion of panelling in the "Presence Chamber" of the Treaty House at Uxbridge. The Commissioners of Charles I. and the Parliament met here later on in the century to negotiate for a treaty of peace. In this example we have the decorative strapwork of the first period in conjunction with the plainer panelling of the second, the centre panel being an interesting instance of the applied Jacobean work, with a decorative border in the earlier style.

The decoration of this period was generally applied, being carved or moulded and then fastened in its place. The effect is that of high relief.

Fig. 101 is a very typical example of Jacobean

woodwork. It is a mantel for a chimney-piece removed from an old house in Lime Street, City, and was presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum by the Fishmongers' Company. It dates from the first part of the seventeenth century. Here we have the architectural façades very much reduced in importance, whilst the applied ornamentation is the prevailing form of decoration.

The diamond or lozenge is frequently found at this time, and particularly on chests, and appears to have made its appearance about the time of Cromwell. Geometrical panelling is found in great variety, and although architectural details are less in use, the round arch still retains its popularity. Bosses and nail headings (terms which explain themselves) are frequently found.

The furniture of the great houses of the seventeenth century did not depend so much for decoration upon fine carving as upon fine coverings. Rich fabrics of velvet, brocade, and silk covered the furniture, frequently to such an extent as to leave a very small area unexposed, and in the bedsteads it is difficult to remark any wood beneath their coverings and draperies of rich stuffs—a great contrast to the magnificent carved wooden bedsteads of Elizabeth. A visit to Knole House,

Sevenoaks, many of the rooms in which are furnished as in the seventeenth century, is an object-lesson in the grand furniture of this period. The Jacobean woodwork, the chests, chairs, sideboards, &c., which we collect in these days, came, of course, from the houses of the merchants and the people. They have not the grand manner of the Elizabethan furniture, but they are simple and singularly pleasing in their decorative qualities, and, moreover, they are constructed strictly with due regard for use. They were made by craftsmen with whom, as with Adam Bede, good carpentry was "God's will," or "at least that form of God's will which most intimately concerned" them.

This book, unlike many others, has no chapter on fakes, which, according to Professor Skeat, is derived from the Middle Dutch *fake*, *facken*, to catch. No doubt it is an invaluable faculty to be able to tell the right thing from the wrong, but, carried too far, it is apt to eclipse the situation. A son of one of the greatest picture dealers told us once that he could tell a fine picture from an imitation at a glance, as quickly as he could tell a pretty woman from a plain one. We have no doubt that the same faculty is possessed by some in regard to furniture. After long experience it is little short of intuition. We have seen it, however,

in the form of an obsession in which beauty, historical interest, utility, and all other precious qualities of furniture are submerged. In such a situation the collector is no longer a student, but a detective.

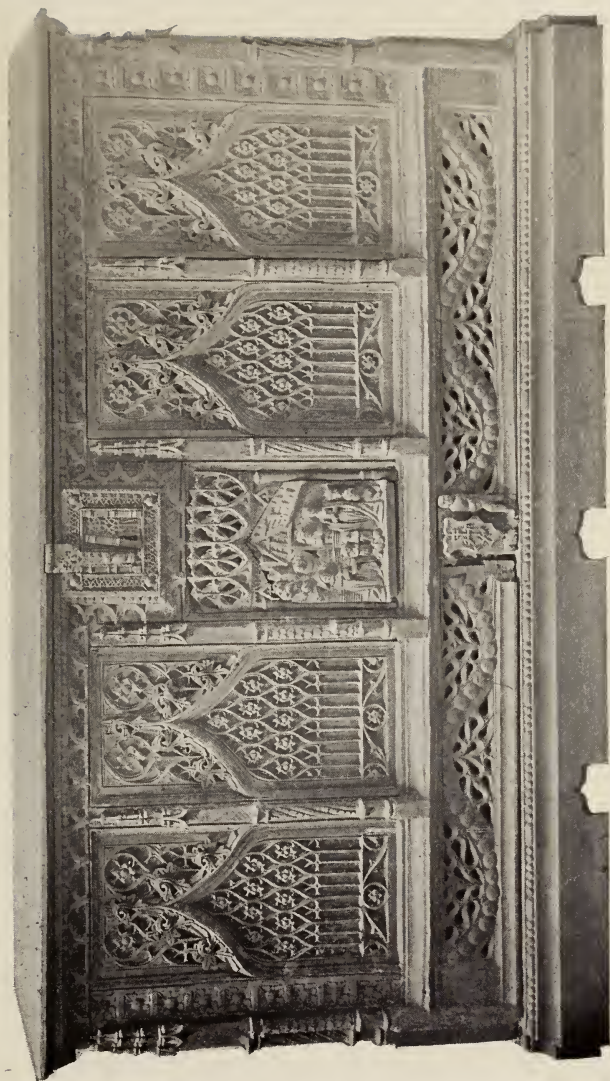


FIG. 1. GOTHIC COFFER IN CREDITON CHURCH



FIG. 2. COFFER OF THE TIME OF HENRY VIII



FIG. 3. FINE ELIZABETHAN INLAID COFFER

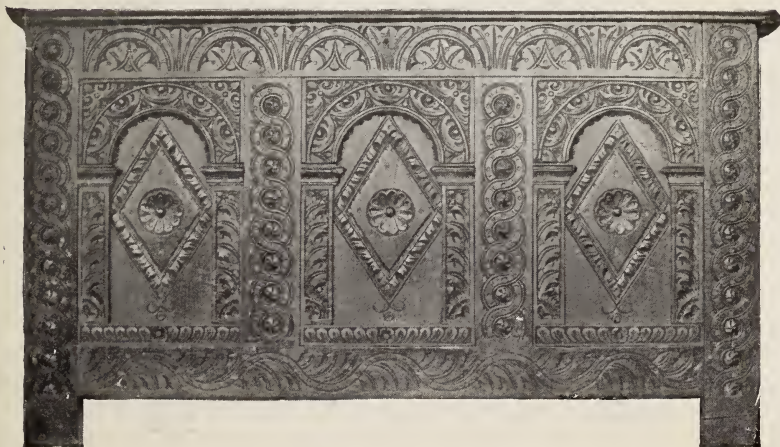


FIG. 4. CHEST WITH ROUND ARCHES (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 5.



FIG. 6



FIG. 7

SIMPLE CHESTS (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 8. CHEST WITH APPLIED ORNAMENTATION (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 9. ESTHER HOBSONNE'S CHEST (DATED 1637)



FIG. 10. FINE CHEST (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 11
JOYNED STOOLS (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 12



FIG. 13. TUDOR STOOL IN THE CHARTERHOUSE, LONDON



FIG. 14. DESK (SIXTEENTH CENTURY)
ON STAND (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 15. BIBLE BOX (EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 16. BIBLE BOX (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 17. CHIP CARVED BOX (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 18
BOX ON STAND (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 19
BOX ON STAND (BOX DATED 1660)



FIG. 20

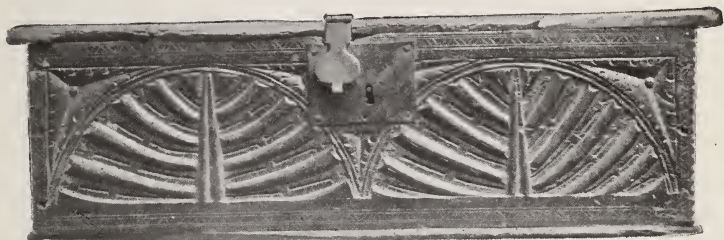


FIG. 21



FIG. 22

SIMPLE BIBLE BOXES (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

(Property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, The Manor House, Hitchin, Herts)



FIG. 23

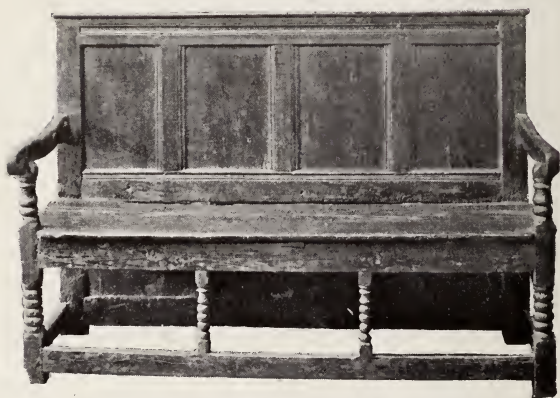


FIG. 24

SETTLES (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 25. SETTLE (EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

(Property of Mr. Walter Withall)

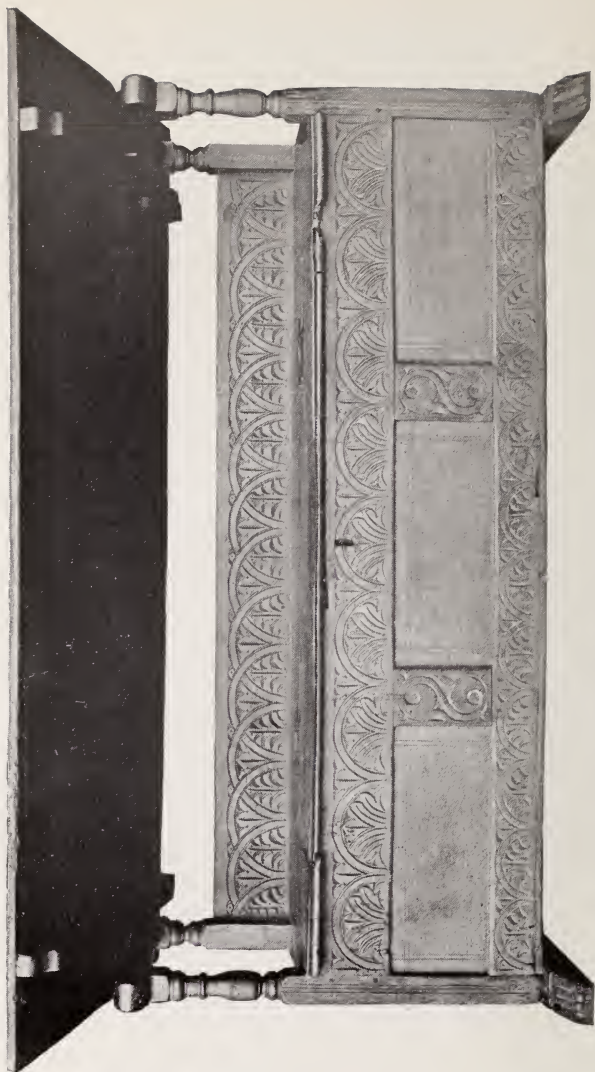


FIG. 26. TABLE SETTLE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 27

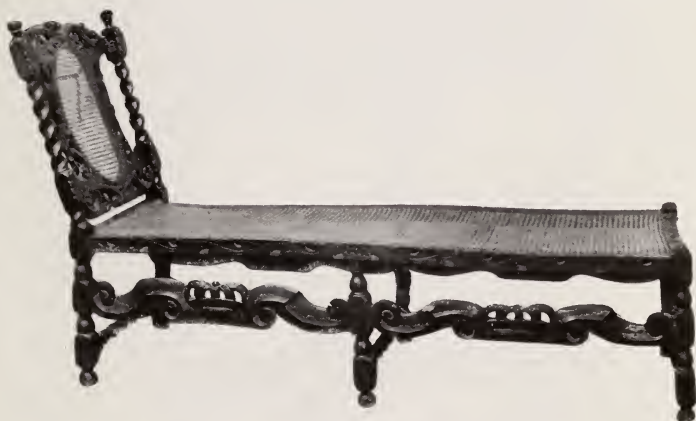


FIG. 28

DAY BEDS (PERIOD CHARLES THE SECOND)

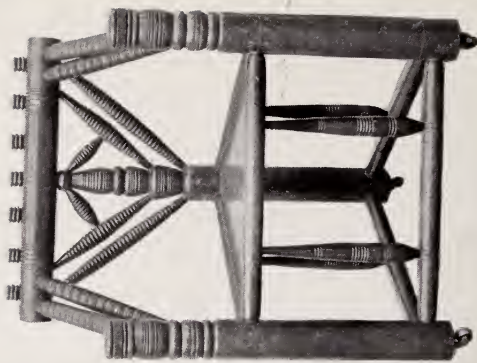


FIG. 31
TYPE OF TURNED CHAIR
(HENRY VIII)



FIG. 30
ARM-CHAIR (HENRY VIII)

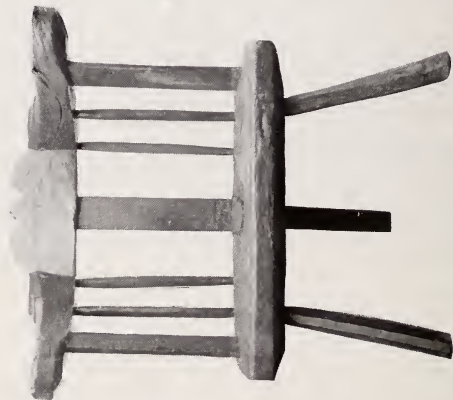


FIG. 29
GOTHIC SEAT



FIG. 32. INLAID CHAIR (ELIZABETHAN)



FIG. 33



FIG. 34

CHILDREN'S CHAIRS (EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 37.

THE WENTWORTH CHAIR

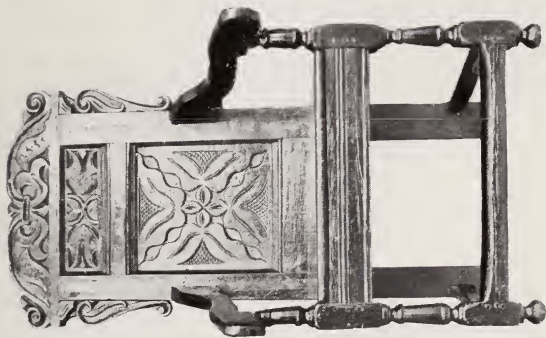


FIG. 36

CHAIRS (EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

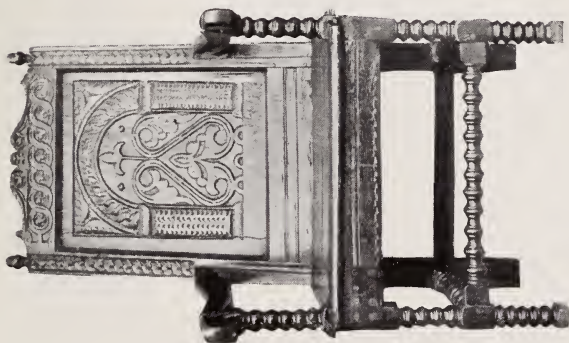


FIG. 35

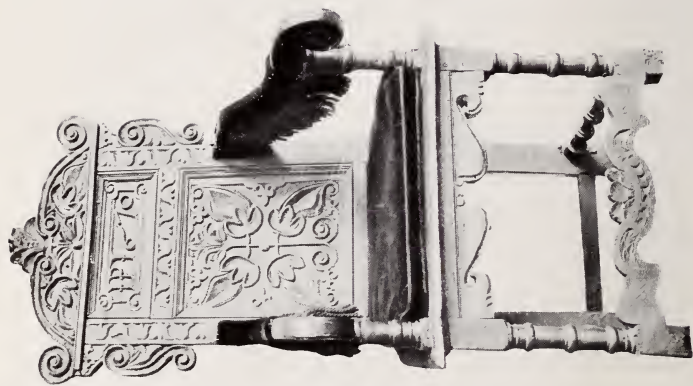


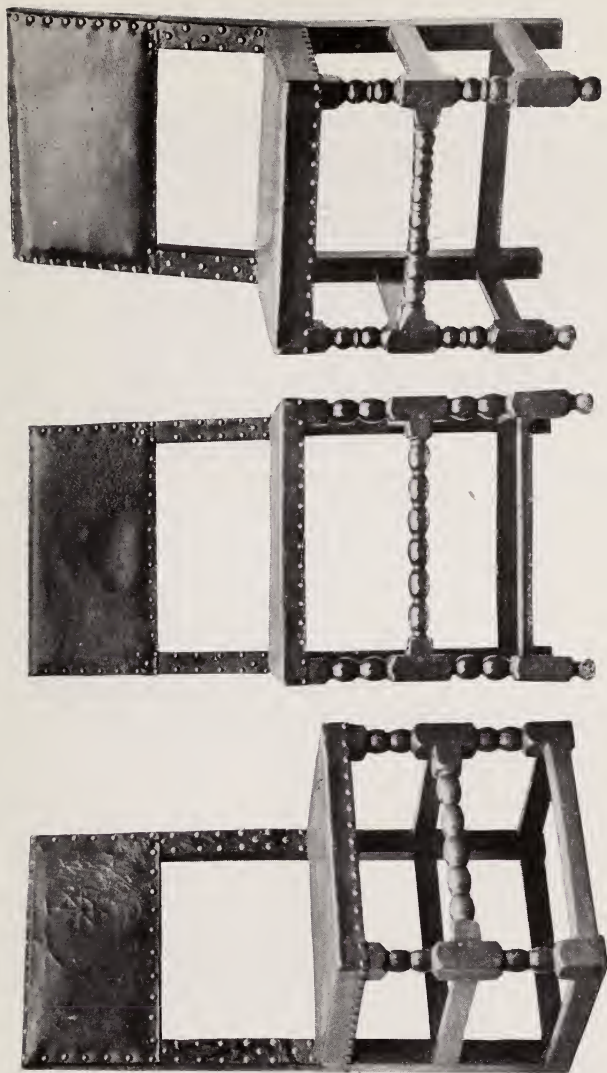
FIG. 38

FINE ARM-CHAIR (DATED 1670)



FIG. 39

SIMPLE CHAIR (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIGS. 40, 41 and 42. CROMWELLIAN CHAIRS
(The property of Messrs. Hamptons Ltd., Pall Mall)

FIG. 43

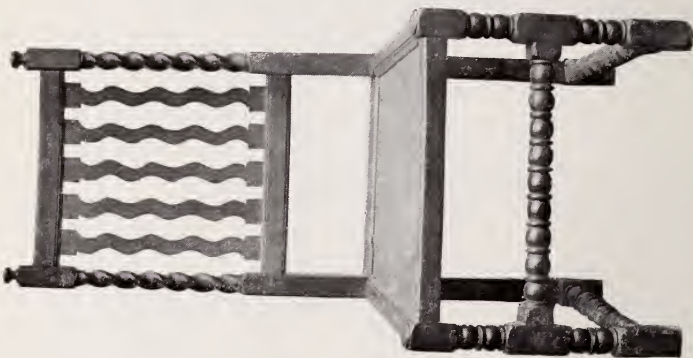
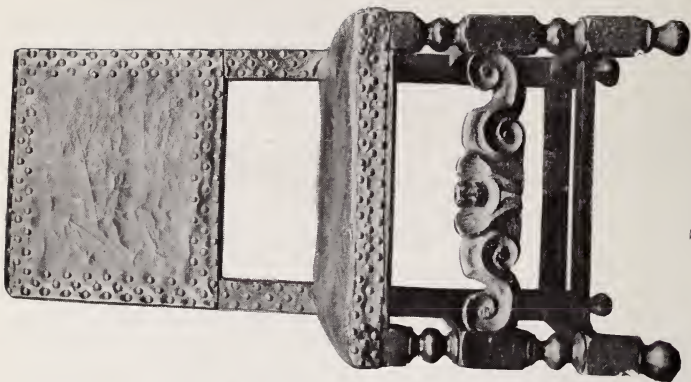


FIG. 44



LATE CROMWELLIAN CHAIRS

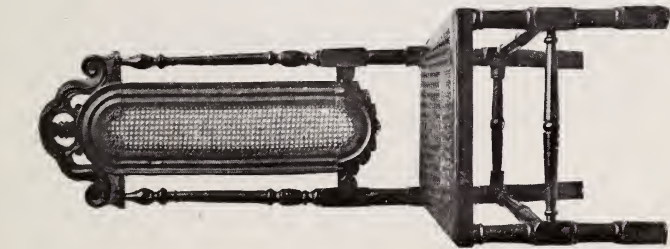


FIG. 45

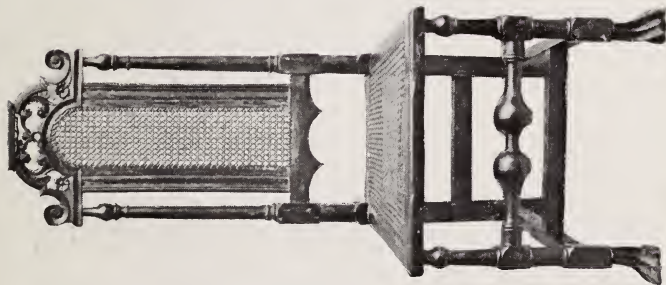


FIG. 46

CHAIRS (STUART PERIOD)

(Property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, The Manor House, Hitchin, Herts)

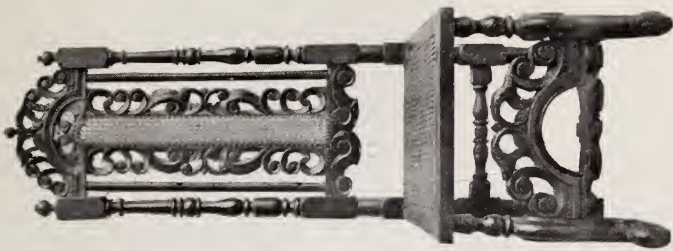


FIG. 47

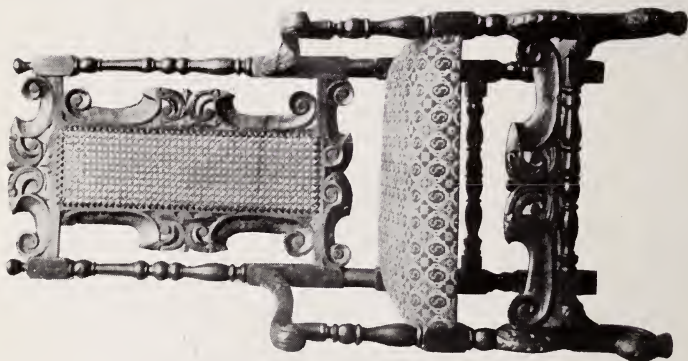


FIG. 48
ARM-CHAIR (STUART PERIOD)



FIG. 49
CHERUB CHAIR (STUART PERIOD)

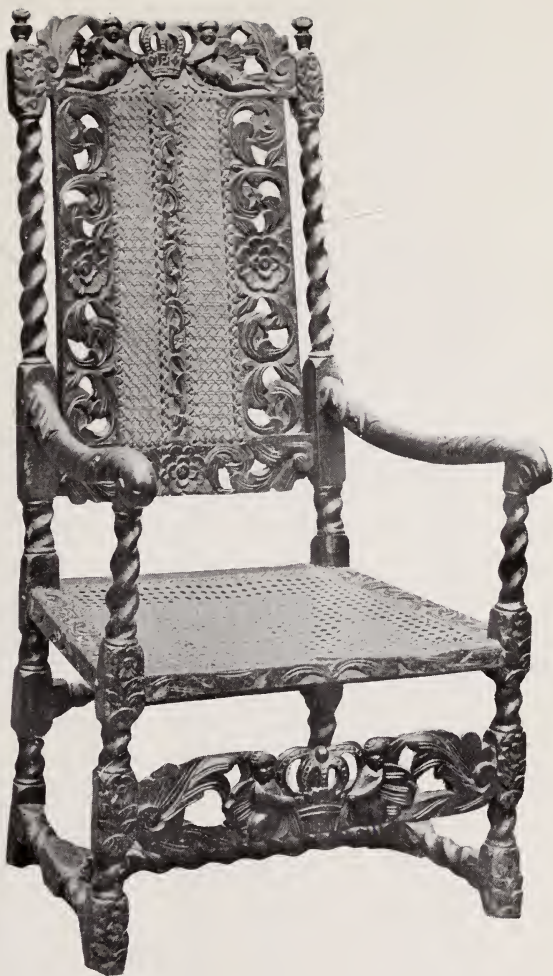


FIG. 50. FINE CHAIR (STUART PERIOD)
The property of Mr. C. J. Charles, 27 Brook Street, W.)



FIG. 51. CHILD'S CHAIR (STUART PERIOD)

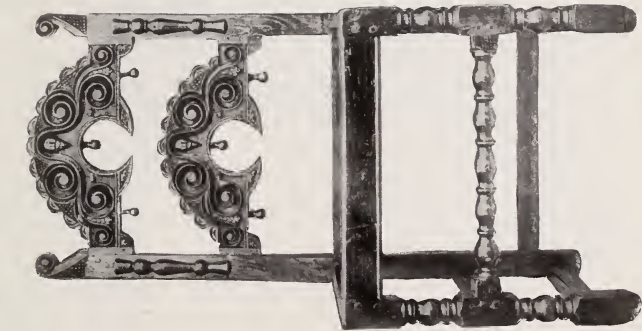


FIG. 52
YORKSHIRE OR DERBYSHIRE CHAIRS
(SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

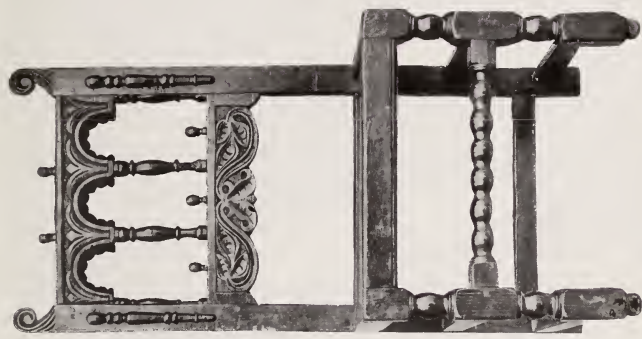


FIG. 53

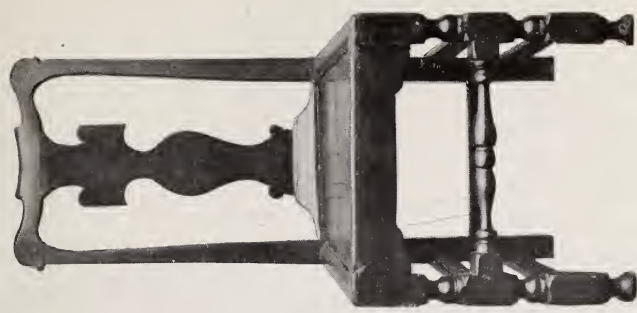


FIG. 54
OAK CHAIR (LATE SEVEN-
TEENTH CENTURY)



FIG 55. OAK TABLE AND BENCH (SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

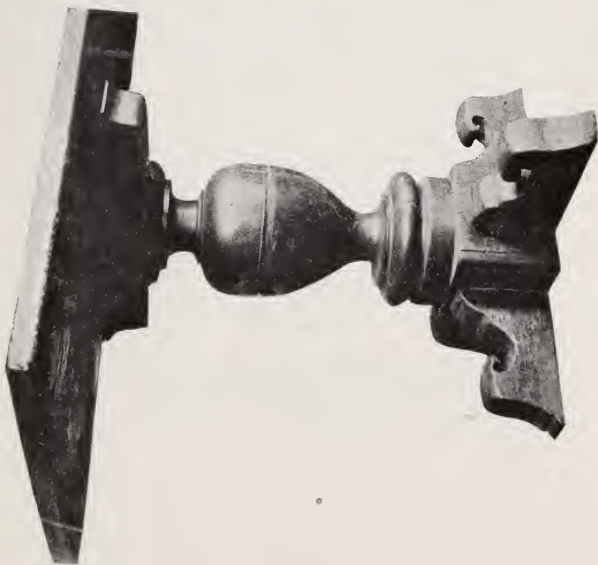


FIG. 56. TABLE LEG (SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

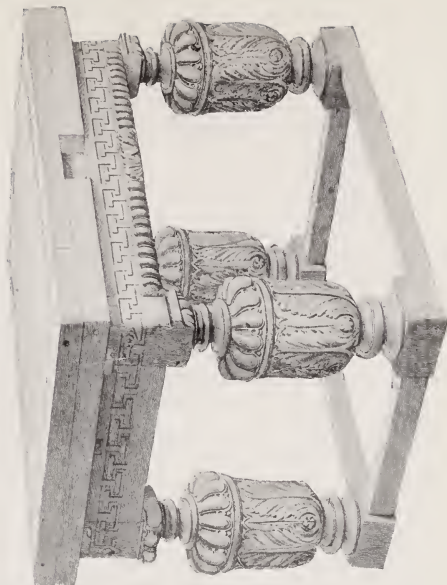


FIG. 57. ELIZABETHAN DRAW-TABLE



FIG 58. ELIZABETHAN INLAID TABLE (LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 59. EL IZABETHAN OCTAGON TABLE (DATED 1666)

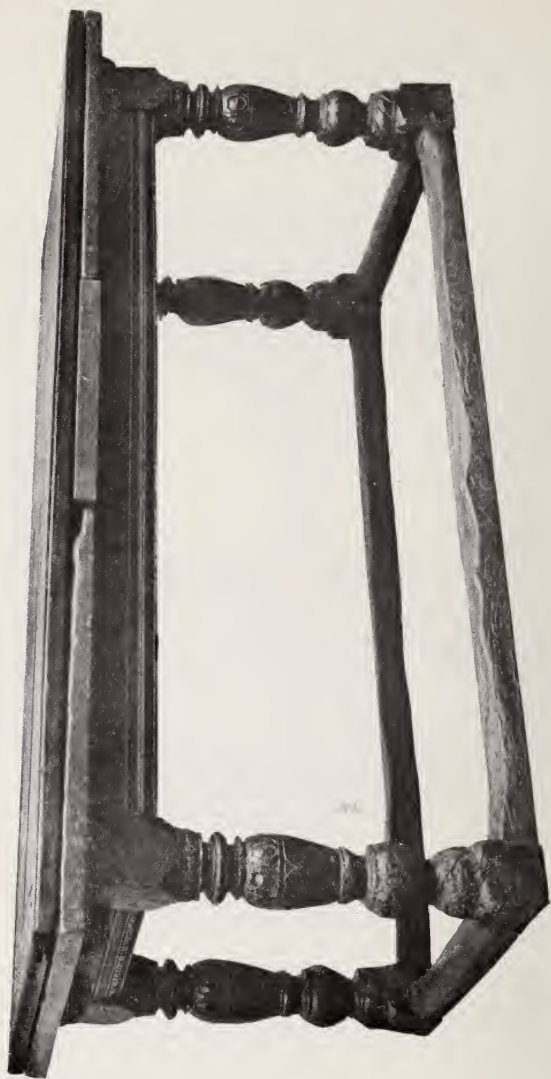


FIG. 60. DRAW-TABLE (EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 61. SMALL CROMWELLIAN TABLE



FIG. 62. STUART RECTANGULAR TABLE



FIG. 63. CHAIR TABLE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 64. GATE-LEG TABLE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 65. GATE-LEG TABLE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 66. GATE LEG TABLE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

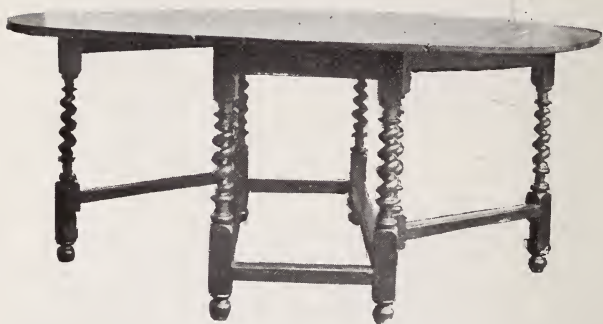


FIG. 67. GATE-LEG TABLE (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 68. GATE-LEG TABLE IN GUILDHALL MUSEUM LONDON
(SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 69. DOLE CUPBOARD OR ALMERY (ABOUT 1500)



FIG. 70. FOOD HUTCH (SIXTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 71. LIVERY CUPBOARD (DATED 1663)



FIG. 72. COURT CUPBOARD (DATED 1689)

(The Property of Messrs. Gill and Reigate, Ltd., Oxford Street, W.)



FIG. 73. FINE ELIZABETHAN COURT CUPBOARD
(The Property of Mr. C. J. Charles, 27 Brook Street, W.)



FIG. 74. COURT CUPBOARD (SEVENTEENTH
CENTURY)

(The Property of Mr. Walter Withall)



FIG. 75. CUPBOARD ON STAND (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 76. CUPBOARD (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 77. SIDEBOARD (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

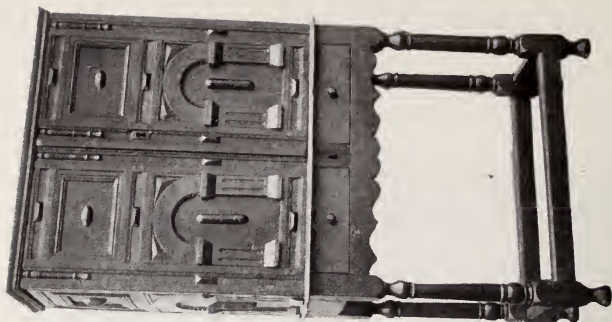


FIG. 78
CABINET ON STAND
(SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 79.

SIDEBOARD (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY): UPPER STORY MODERN



FIG. 80.

CHEST OF DRAWERS ON TURNED LEGS
(LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 81
HEAD OF BEDSTEAD (FIRST HALF OF SIXTEENTH
CENTURY)



FIG. 82
HEAD OF BEDSTEAD (END OF SIXTEENTH
CENTURY)



FIG. 83.
END OF BEDSTEAD (EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 84
SIMPLE OAK BEDSTEAD (JACOBEAN PERIOD)

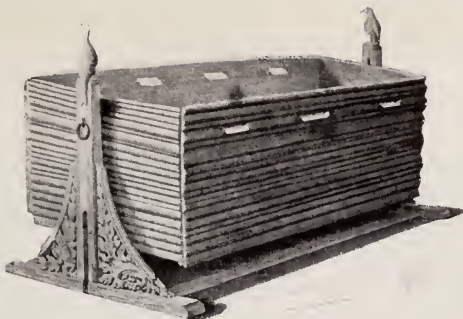


FIG. 85. CRADLE OF HENRY V
(In the Collection of H.M. the King)

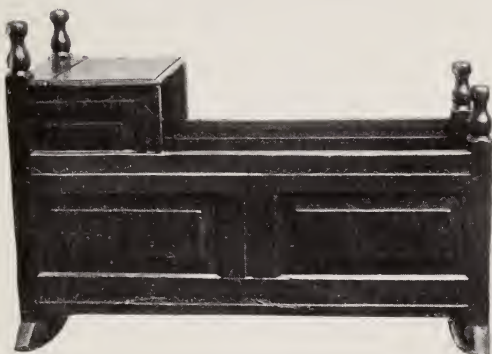


FIG. 86. SIMPLE CRADLE (SEVENTEENTH
CENTURY)



FIG. 87. HOODED CRADLE (LATE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

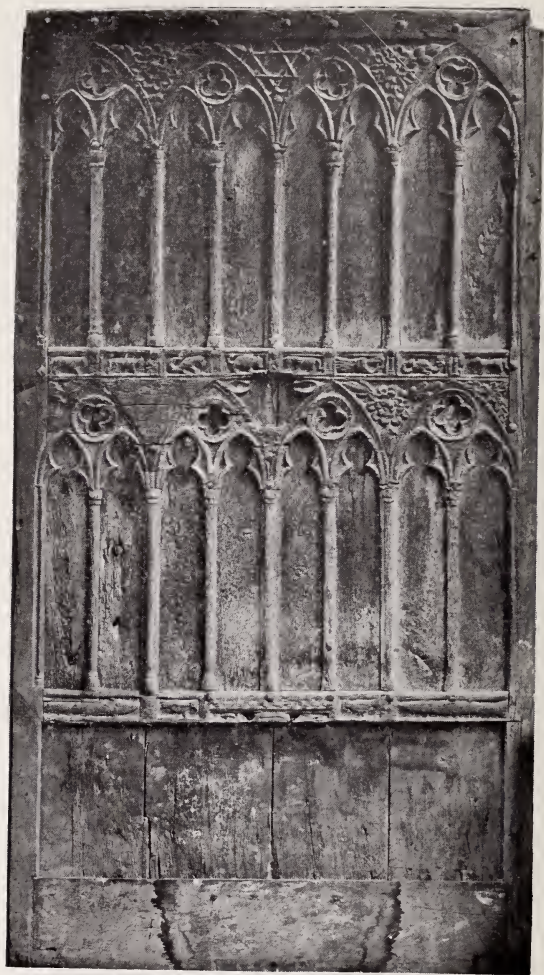


FIG. 88. GOTHIC DOOR (SECOND HALF OF THIRTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 89. GOTHIC COFFRETTE
(The Property of Mr. Walter Withall)



FIG. 90. GOTHIC PANEL (LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG 91. FRONT OF TILTING-CHEST (SECOND HALF OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG 92. OPENWORK CARVING (FIFTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 93. LINENFOLD PANELLING (EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

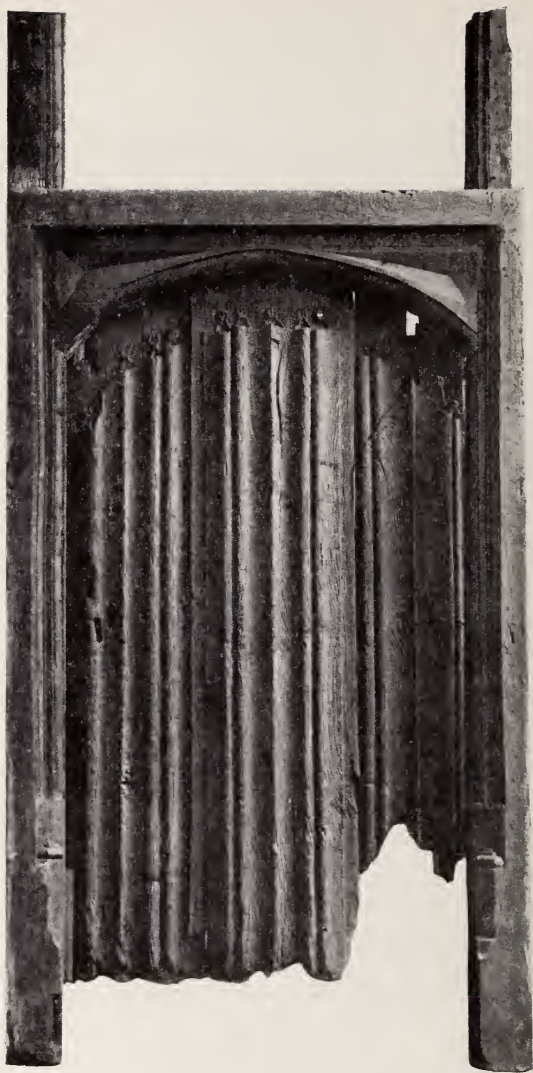


FIG. 94
LINENFOLD DOOR (EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 95. PORTRAIT MEDALLION PANELLING (EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 96. PORTRAIT MEDALLION PANELLING (EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 97. PANELLING (EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 98
STRAPWORK (LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 99
CARVED AND INLAID PANELLING (LATE SIXTEENTH
CENTURY)

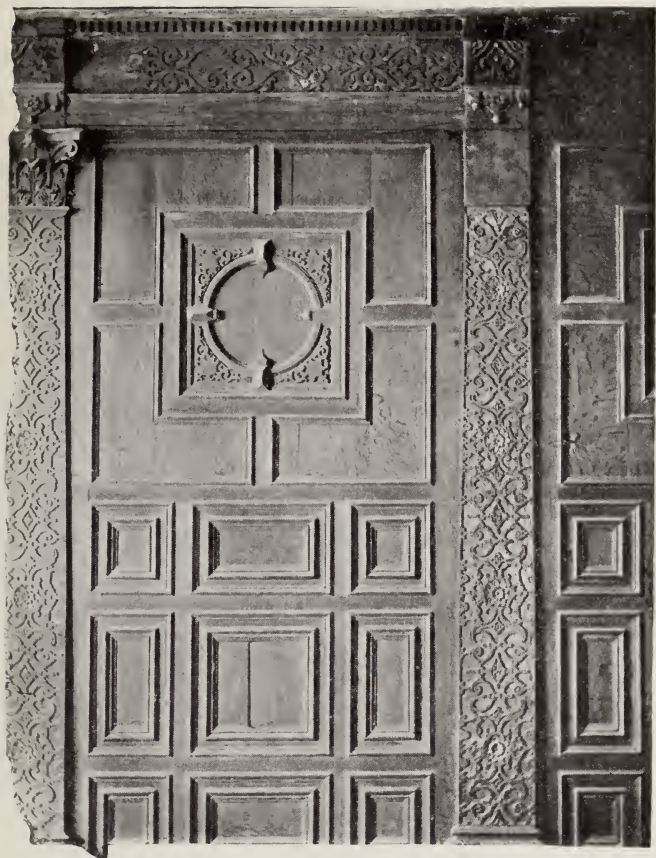


FIG. 100
PANELLING (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

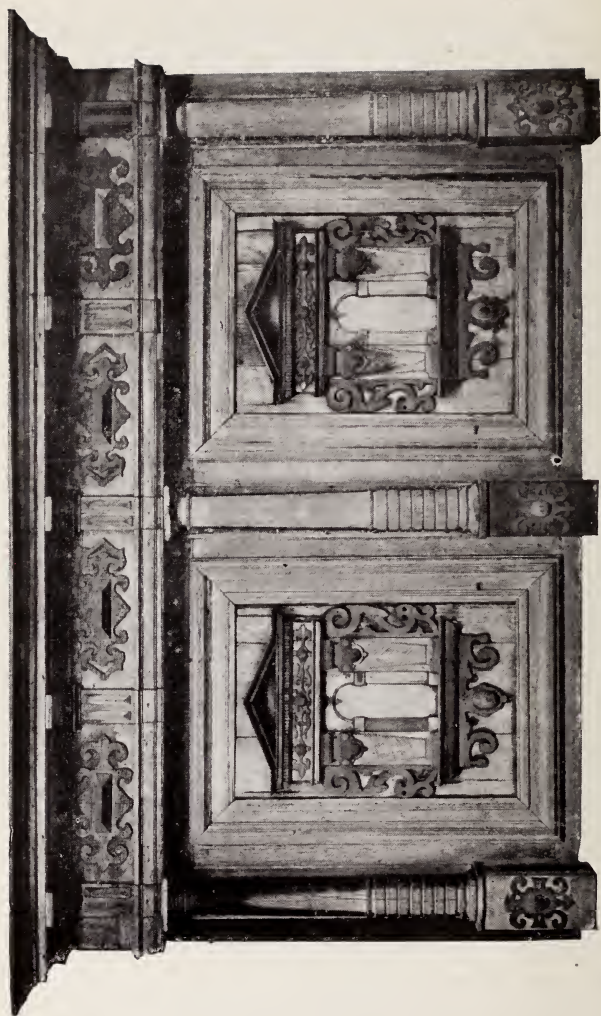


FIG. 101

MANTEL FOR CHIMNEYPiece (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

INDEX

- ALMERY, 86, 92
Anglo-Saxon and Norman furniture, 105
Architectural characteristics in Elizabethan furniture, 116
Architectural façades on chests, 21, 116
Architecture, its influence on furniture, 89
Armoire, 81
Auction sales, 13
- BALUSTRADE ornaments, 91, 93, 94
Bedsteads, Anglo-Saxon and Norman, 97, 98
Bedroom furniture, 2
Courtenay, 100
Day-beds, 47, 48
Elizabethan, 100, 101
Great Bed of Ware, 100
Henry VIII., 101
Jacobean, 101, 102
Knole House, 49, 56
Renaissance period, 100
Shakespeare's, 101
Truckle or Trundle, 99
Bible Boxes, chip carved, 39, 40
as reading desks, 38
country made, 41
dated, 1660, 41
on stands, 38, 40
seventeenth-century, 38, 39
"Board and Lodging," 69
Bosses, 118
Buffet, 85
Bureau, 3
- CARVING, chip, 39, 40, 105
Cock's head, 113
Dolphin, 113
Elizabethan characteristics, 116, 117
Gothic, 106-110
- Carving, incised, 105
Jacobean characteristics, 117, 118, 119
Linenfold, 19, 20, 53, 101, 117
Notched ornaments, 39
Parchemin panelling, 112
Relief, 105
Renaissance, 113, 114, 115
Romaine, 20, 112, 113
Strapwork, 25, 116
Windsor, carved stalls at, 18
- Chairs in Anglo-Saxon and Norman times, 52
a luxury in early times, 31
Cabriole leg, early form of, 49, 66
Carolean, 60
Charles II., 58, 60, 62
Cherub or Cupid decoration on, 61, 62
Children's, 57, 62
Cromwell, 60
Currule or X-shaped, 54, 56
Derbyshire, 63
Elizabethan panelled, 55
Gothic, 53
Henry VIII. period, 53
seventeenth-century, 57
"Thrown" or turned, 54
upholstered, 56
Wentworth, 58
with brackets or ears, 58
- Charterhouse, furniture at, 36
Chaucer, reference to tables, 70
Chests and Coffers, Crediton Church Coffer, 16
early use of, 15
Elizabethan, 21, 22
Esther Hobsonne's Chest, 27
Gothic, 15, 16

- Chests and Coffers, Guild of
 Cofferers, 31
 Jacobean, 23, 26, 27, 28
 Mule Chest, 96
 "Offley" Coffer at South-
 wark Cathedral, 21
 Tilting Chests, 16, 110
 with drawers, 26, 96
 Chests of Drawers, evolution of,
 95, 96
 Jacobean, 95, 96
 Coffers (*see* Chests and Coffers)
 Coffrette, property of Mr. Walter
 Withall, 107
 Colour of Old Oak, 10
 Court Cupboards of early times,
 81
 Elizabethan, 90
 general history of, 84, 85, 86
 Jacobean, in Mr. Walter
 Withall's Collection, 91
 seventeenth - century, 88,
 92
 Courtenay Bedstead, 100
 Coverings to furniture, 118
 Cradles, dated 1671, 104
 Elizabeth's (Princess), 104
 Henry V., 103
 hooded, seventeenth-cen-
 tury, 104
 James I., 104
 simple, 104
 Credence, 82, 85
 Creditor, carved chest at, 16
 Cupboards, 85, 87, 92 (*see* also
 Court Cupboards)
 Currule or X Chairs, 54, 56

 DAUPHIN of France and Dolphin
 decorations, 39
 Day-beds, of Jacobean and
 Carolean times, 47, 48
 mentioned in Shakespeare's
 "Richard III.," 47
 "Dentists' Oak," 29
 Desks, "Robert Baker" desk,
 dated 1660, 41
 at Victoria and Albert
 Museum, 38

 Dining-room, furniture suitable
 for, 5, 60, 63, 67, 78
 Dole Cupboards, 86, 87, 92
 Dovetailing, 109
 Dowels, 10
 Drawing-room furniture, 2
 Dresser or Dressoir, derivation
 of term, 85
 in time of Edward I., 82
 Jacobean, 93, 94
 Welsh and Yorkshire, 95

 EGYPTIAN furniture, 106
 Elizabethan period, distinctive
 features, 116
 Elizabeth's reign, standard of
 comfort increased, 55
 Exeter Cathedral, Bishop's
 Throne, 17

 FAKES, 119
 Falstaff's Chamber and furni-
 ture, 100
 "Figuring" in Oak, 11
 Floors, insanitary condition of,
 75
 Food hutch, 87

 GATE-LEG tables, 5, 78, 79, 80
 Green's "History," reference to
 Puritanism, 63
 Gothic styles, 106-110

 HENRY VIII., houses in time of,
 54
 Holbein, a designer of furniture,
 115
 Hutch, food, 87

 ITALIAN influence, 54, 56, 72,
 113, 117
 "Ivanhoe," reference to furni-
 ture in, 52

 KENTISH furniture, 26
 Knole House, admission to, 56
 Box Settle at, 49, 102
 Charles I. furniture at, 56

- Knole House, history of, 49-51,
56
James I., bedroom at, 51
Venetian or X-shaped chairs
at, 56
- LIBRARY furniture, 3
Linenfold carving, 19, 20, 53,
101, 111
Lit clos, 98
Livery cupboards, 85, 86, 87
Livery, servants, 86
- MELON bulb, 72, 76
Monk's bench, 46
Mouldings, 24, 26, 117
Mule chests, 96
- NAIL head ornaments, 26, 91
93, 118
Norman architecture, its in-
fluence on furniture, 90
- "OFFLEY" chest at South-
wark Cathedral, 21
- PAINTED walls in early times, 98
Parlours introduced, 53
Pepys' "Diary," 77
Puritanism, 63
- RENAISSANCE, 114
Romaine style of decoration, 20,
112
Rushes as floor coverings, 75
- SALES, auction, 13
Salt, sitting above the, 56
Settles, Farmhouse, 44
Monk's bench, 46
in Saxon times, 43
in Tudor times, 43
Table, 47
used as Coffers, 43
Yorkshire, 45
Shakespeare, Bedstead men-
tioned in will of, 101
reference to Day-beds, 47
to Falstaff's furniture, 100
- Shakespeare, reference to Great
Bed of Ware, 100
Joint-stools, 35
Trestle tables, 71
Sideboards, 85, 93, 94 (*see also*
under Court Cupboards)
Silver furniture at Knole House
51
Sizergh Castle panelling, 116
Sleeping closets in old MSS., 97
Spiral turnery, 59
Stools, at Charterhouse, 36
Coffin, 34, 36
Elizabethan, 35
Joyned, 34
mentioned in "Romeo
and Juliet", 35
Strapwork, 22
Strutt, Gentleman's house in
time of Henry VIII.
described, 54
condition of floors, 75
- TABLES, Chair, 78
Cromwellian, 77
Elizabethan, 71, 72, 73, 74,
76
Elizabethan Octagonal at
Carpenter's Hall, 74
Gate-leg, 5, 78, 79, 80
Henry VIII., 71
in Mr. Walter Withall's
Collection, 71
Melon bulb on, 72
Norman, 70
Oak table and bench, 70
of Degrees, 83
Refectory, 6
referred to by Chaucer, 70
Round, early, 69
referred to by Shakespeare,
71
Small tables generally used,
76
Stuart, late, 78
Trestle, 70
Withdrawing, 6, 72
mechanism of, 72
Tea, its influence on furniture, 77

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Tilting Chests, 110</p> <p>Truckle or trundle beds, 99</p> <p>UXBRIDGE, Treaty House, panel- ling at, 117</p> <p>VARNISH, 11</p> <p>WALNUT Wood furniture in fashion, 63 origin of, in England, 65</p> <p>Wainscoted chambers in early times, 98</p> | <p>Ware, Great Bed of, 100</p> <p>"Wentworth" Chair, 58</p> <p>Windsor, carved stalls at, 18</p> <p>Withall's, Mr. Walter, Collec- tion, 40, 45, 71, 91, 107</p> <p>Wright's "Homes of other Days," 55, 82, 97</p> <p>X-SHAPE or Currule Chairs, 54, 56</p> <p>YORKSHIRE Chairs, 63 Settles, 45</p> |
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